

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A COURT PAINTER

BY H. JONES THADDEUS

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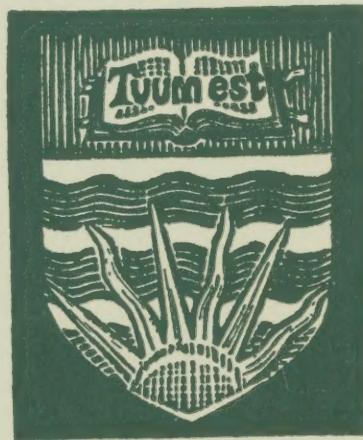
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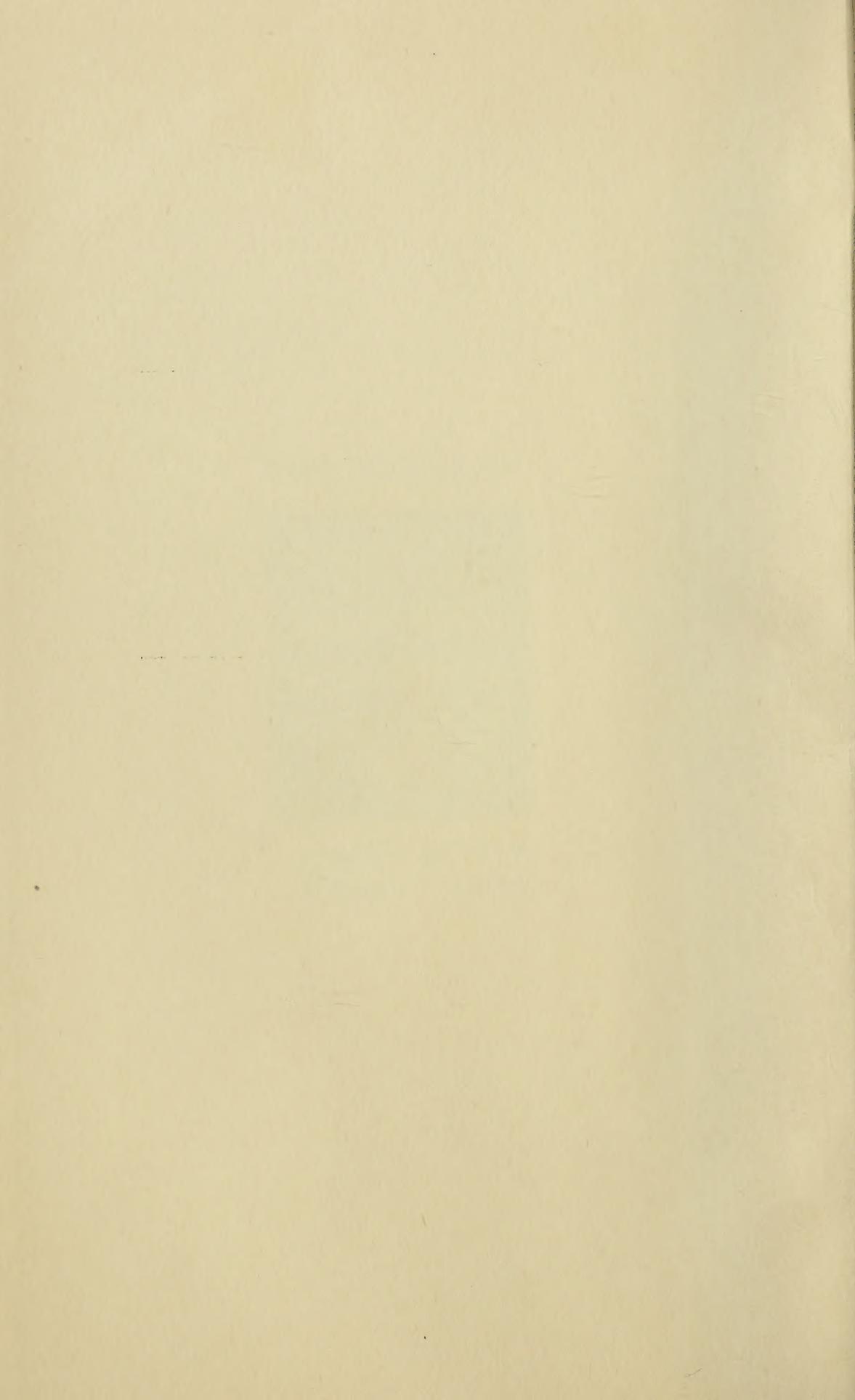


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**RECOLLECTIONS OF A COURT  
PAINTER**



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THE AUTHOR. BY HIMSELF.

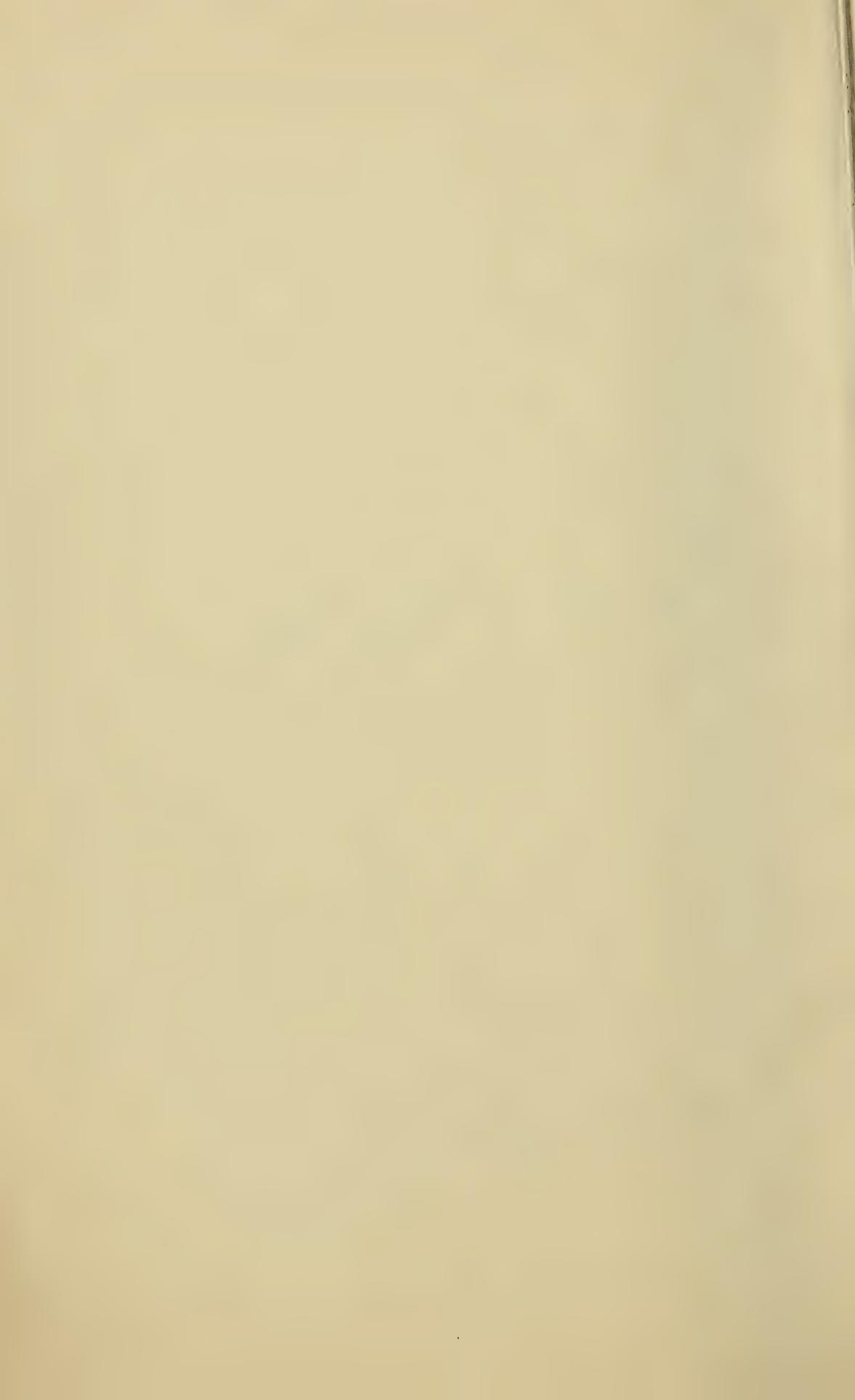
RECOLLECTIONS OF  
A COURT PAINTER  
BY H. JONES THADDEUS  
WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

*His Highness the Duke of Teck*



## PREFACE

I CAN only trust that the many defects of this my maiden effort to wield that which is mightier than the sword may be mercifully overlooked by the indulgent reader. Unlike some of my political friends, I have never learnt the art of sitting on a fence, moreover being an independent-minded person, that position would not be agreeable to me. I tell my story with frankness and candour, exactly as I would relate it to a sympathetic friend, who having enjoyed my hospitality patiently endured his host's loquacity. The early period of my life passed in Florence, enriched by the correspondence with which Her Royal Highness the late Duchess of Teck honoured me, I submitted for corrections or abridgments to Her Majesty the Queen. I had several interviews with the Duke of Teck on Her Majesty's behalf, and as now published, his wishes, corrections and abridgments have been faithfully carried out.

H. J. T.



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**RECOLLECTIONS OF A COURT  
PAINTER**



# RECOLLECTIONS OF A COURT PAINTER

## CORK AND LONDON

**A** RAMSHACKLE, tumble-down building, with a pathetic notice at the head of its staircase imploring students not to jump or run down in a body, as the steps would probably give way; such was the Cork school of art, when, as a boy of ten, in the year of grace 1870, I crossed its well-worn threshold and was initiated into the mysteries of elementary art. Heedless of the notice, however, the wild youngsters rushed up and down anyhow (the more prudent, uniting caution with pleasure, generally slid down the banisters), until one day the stairs did give way, with the result that quite a number of budding geniuses (after an absence for necessary repairs) returned to their studies, ornamented with sticking plaster and other souvenirs of their thrilling experience, to the general envy of the other boys. After a year spent in the freehand class I was elevated to the cast room, where I commenced my studies from the round with a head of Homer. The history of the casts from the Antique in this room is an interesting one, apart from the fact that for many years

## Recollections of a Court Painter

they formed the most complete collection in the United Kingdom.

When George the Third was king, the Pope of that time wished to offer him some valuable gift, and directed that casts in plaster should be made from the most renowned masterpieces of Grecian sculpture in the Vatican, for presentation to his Majesty. The order was carried out, and the casts shipped in due course to England.

A storm, however, arose and the ship, beaten out of its track, was wrecked in Cork harbour.

The news of this disaster was conveyed to King George, who, having little taste for art, and no desire to incur the expense of salvage, intimated to the people of Cork that if they chose to save the Pope's gift from the wreck, his Majesty would graciously make it over to them in consideration of their trouble.

More enlightened than the king, they willingly accepted the offer ; and it was from these beautiful reproductions that Maclise, Mulready, Barry, Foley, and many other Irish artists made their early studies. In my time the casts were black with a century's dirt. It never seemed to strike their custodians to dust or wash them, until one day an enlightened visitor made the suggestion, and it was carried out. I shall never forget the delight with which I contemplated the noble collection, as reincarnated in the purest of white it stood out in bold relief from the dingy wall behind. One could then realise how great a loss the English art world had sustained through the parsimony of the thankless and unappreciative king.

## Cork and London

When about fourteen I had practically gone through the set, and, having taken the usual prizes, was appointed assistant-master, a post just then vacated in the school of art.

My new duties called for lectures on practical, plane, and solid geometry, building construction, elementary anatomy, and perspective, in all which subjects I was fairly well posted. As a matter of course I had to superintend the drawing classes. The elevation to this position, from ringleader of the mischief-making faction, was at first a little trying, but the other boys behaved very well. Wild and unruly as they undoubtedly were, my former prowess endeared me to them, and I never had any trouble. My lectures were attentively followed, without the usual disturbance, and in this respect they showed me more consideration than they did the chief himself.

The head-master at that time was James Brennan, later transferred to the more important School of Art in Dublin.

When about seventeen years of age I won the Taylor Art Prize of £60 a year, with a small picture entitled "Renewal of the Lease Refused," suggested by an incident of the Land War then agitating Ireland. Exhibited in Dublin with the other competing works, the painting was purchased by Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P., then in Dublin serving on a commission studying the political situation.

The winning of the scholarship, together with the liberal cheque I received from Mr. Chaplin, formed a very important episode in my life. I was now enabled to go to London, where I

## Recollections of a Court Painter

soon afterwards entered Heatherly's studio, and made my first serious acquaintance with the art of painting.

A sanguine, receptive boy, as I was then, learns much more from his fellows than from a professor. In any case Heatherly knew little about painting, and judiciously gave us a wide berth. He simply ran the studio, only venturing on suggestions or corrections with regard to the work of beginners, or of the young ladies' class. The latter were much impressed by his venerable appearance and paternal manner. Robed in a long, dark crimson-velvet dressing-gown, with black skull-cap, long white hair and flowing beard, he resembled, as he meandered at regular intervals through the studio, a resurrected alchemist of mediæval times. His solace and only accomplishment was playing a flute, whose melancholy strains, after every passage at arms with the unruly members of his art-family, echoed through the building like a wail of reproach. He submitted sorrowfully to the constant raillery of the scoffers, but on one point was as adamant—he permitted no intercourse or conversation with the models.

On one occasion poor old Heatherly was placed in a predicament at once delicate and unusual; and for some time afterwards his life was a burden to him.

Every Monday morning there was a new model for the week in the life-class, then studying the nude; and it was customary for the students to arrive early on that morning in order to set their palettes and prepare for the new study. The setting of a palette varies with the

## Cork and London

temperament of the artist; but amongst students it usually means the disposing of an enormous mass of colours around the palette, in addition to the old paint already there.

This important ceremony concluded, the palettes are carefully placed on the chairs of their respective owners, who then await the posing of the model.

On the memorable morning of Heatherly's discomfiture the students were requested, as usual, to leave the studio for the adjoining room; whilst, in their absence, the model undressed in her alcove, and Heatherly arranged the pose and drapery forming the background. She was a new model, new to her profession, and the ways of students. Having given the last touches to her hair, the only costume or adornment she had, the young woman appeared to take up her position. The old man was still engaged arranging the drapery, disposing this fold, and changing that, apparently not satisfied with the effect produced.

She waited some time patiently, watching him, and then sat down on the nearest chair to rest; at last Heatherly finished his task, and beckoned to her to take her place.

She arose, and a palette, laden with colour, accompanied her upward movement.

Unaccustomed to such an attachment, she bent round and removed the palette, the colours on which, so carefully arranged previously, were now an indescribable squash.

Heatherly stood aghast at the sight presented to his watery eyes. The students, outside the closed doors, were getting impatient; requesting

## Recollections of a Court Painter

him, through the keyhole, to wake up, sarcastically informing him that it was not yet bedtime.

The poor bewildered old man was at his wits' end. The model also was distracted, and made desperate efforts to remove the paint, but only succeeded in spreading it more completely. There was no convenience for her in privacy to perform any ablutions; and, meantime, the students were clamouring every moment more loudly for admittance.

Something had to be done, and quickly. Heatherly seized some turpentine and a palette knife, and, requesting the unhappy girl to take such a position as would facilitate his task, he sank on his knees, scraped the thick colour off with a palette knife, and proceeded to apply turpentine with a rag to remove the remaining paint.

It was at this moment that the students, unable to restrain their impatience any longer, broke through the rules and entered *en masse*. The sight they beheld arrested them for an instant; but when they realised the situation, the studio rang with shouts of hysterical laughter. Poor Heatherly terminated the cleansing operation as rapidly as possible, but very imperfectly, and put the model in position, carefully arranging the pose, so that the stains still remaining were not observed.

He then reproached the students bitterly for their levity of conduct; and in great indignation retired to his *sanctum sanctorum*, whence came presently a wail of anguish from his one sympathetic friend—the flute.

## Cork and London

The Oxford Music Hall was in those days the students' great rendezvous.

Well I remember the red-nosed gentleman who presided at a table near the stage, with his much envied friends sitting around it, helping him to pour libations on the altar of Bacchus.

As each new number appeared he stood up, rapped on the table with a hammer, and announced in strident tones the name and quality of the artist about to perform. In the course of the evening his voice became huskier and huskier; and as a rule, towards the end, a sympathetic friend supported him in his effort to maintain an upright position whilst announcing in a hoarse whisper the last number.

The audience, particularly the students, invariably took part in the performance, interjecting remarks and suggestions, and in their folly even defying the chairman, who, when not calling the numbers or busy with his glass, was eternally shouting "Order! order!"

Standing quarrels amongst the students were always settled inside the music hall; after words came blows, and in a few minutes a tangled mass would be rocking backwards and forwards, hitting right and left, the audience and artists on the stage looking on, deeply interested in the fight. The chairman, furious at the disturbance, reiterated his parrot cry until he was purple in the face, whilst the "chuckers out" began to get busy and earn their wages. In the end, of course, we were all thrown out; but with our exit the audience lost the charm of the evening.

We sometimes invaded the Criterion Music

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Hall, patronised by rival bands of art and medical students, often reinforced by contingents of military cadets from Sandhurst ; and on those occasions a battle-royal usually took place.

The chairman there was of the same bibulous family as our friend of the Oxford, but more easily aroused to anger. He had a difficult audience to deal with, and on Saturday nights, the night generally chosen for our combats, eyed with stern disapproval the successive appearance of the different clans, one noisier than the other.

Macdermot was then the lion of the music halls with his song—

“ We don’t want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do,  
We’ve got the men, we’ve got the ships, we’ve got the  
money too ”

—a song which had a phenomenal success.

We always joined in the chorus, and after cheering the singer madly, turned to family matters, a contingency the chairman had anticipated by posting chuckers out at strategic points.

The fray which ensued generally put a stop to further performances on the stage, whilst the chairman in frenzied shouts issued blood-curdling commands to the chuckers out, who, knocked about themselves, showed little ceremony in the manner they deposited the belligerents on the pavement outside. The hasty, undignified, and painful nature of their exit usually reconciled the combatants, and they solaced themselves with cutting remarks on the common enemy, until told to “ move on ” by a body of police specially retained for their benefit.

Apart from the usual student life which dis-

## Cork and London

tinguished those early days in London, I spent many pleasant hours in literary circles, comprising Miss Braddon, Mrs. Henry Wood, and other popular writers of that time. I remember Mrs. Georgina Weldon (then much talked about) best, possibly because she was a very pretty woman, and deigned to notice me.

My friend Sutherland Edwards, of the *Times*, presented me to most of his musical friends, amongst others to J. W. Davison, the great musical critic, who wielded a power before which famous composers and singers trembled. He was married to Arabella Goddard, the renowned pianist, and the "musicales" at his house were the best in London. He counted amongst his friends the most brilliant men of the day, and it was a delight to listen to the *bons mots* and anecdotes which passed around the group assembled at his receptions.

In *Personal Recollections*, by Sutherland Edwards, published a few years ago, a good story is told of Davison, which I venture to quote :—

"Davison was almost always genial and affable, but I well remember a sharp reply he once made to a critic of his acquaintance whom he did not like, but who pretended to like him.

"'I constantly praise your articles, Jim,' said this gentleman, with an excess of familiarity not quite justified by their relations, 'and you never say a word in favour of mine.'

"'When you tell me my articles are good,' replied Davison, 'you don't mean it; but when I tell you that yours are bad, I do.'"

There was also a clever couplet by his friend

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Charles Kenny, which Davison himself considered good enough to publish in the *Musical World*—

“There was a J. W. D.  
Who wished a composer to be,  
But his muse wouldn’t budge,  
So he set up as judge  
Of better composers than he!”

In the autumn of 1879 I decided to complete my studies in Paris, and accordingly in October of that year started for the gay city. I was then in my nineteenth year, full of enthusiasm and animal spirits, with abounding confidence in my motto, “Nil Desperandum.”

## PARIS

**A**FTER a month spent in visiting the galleries and museums of Paris, and in seeing the sights generally, I joined Julien's studio, under Boulanger and Lefebvre.

There were then about sixty or seventy students, as wild a lot of scapegraces as could be found in Paris. When they worked they worked hard, and when they played they played with a vengeance. They had only one feeling of respect, and that was towards *le maître*, whether Boulanger or Lefebvre, and, whilst either was making his round, inspecting the work and giving counsel, a pin could have been heard drop.

The moment, however, that the door of the studio closed on the one object of their veneration, pandemonium was let loose. The model, relieved from his wearisome pose, gradually stretched himself and restored the lost circulation to his stiffened limbs, whilst those students, favoured with approval or otherwise, were the objects of the noisiest banter.

As a *nouveau* I went through the usual formula, cleaned up all the brushes (no easy job), and did general fagging, until the next new arrival brought relief from my task. One of the ordeals was, to strip off, and perform various antics, as ordained by the crowd, to-

## Recollections of a Court Painter

gether with paying for a "punch" all round, which I did with the greatest good-humour; as a result, escaping many other inflictions.

A large number of the students were *ravins* of a very pronounced description; but on the whole their jokes were very harmless, and, although their ages ranged from seventeen to sixty, they were really in many respects like a lot of children. Even their most sinister practical jokes had much humour in them, frequently furnished by the nature of their own discomfiture.

A portion of the studio looked into a kind of court, common in Paris, around the sides of which were other buildings; the ground floors occupied by different business people and the upper floors let in apartments. The ladies occupying the latter generally carried on their domestic conversations with their neighbours from the windows, and there was, in consequence, a constant noise of talking, mixed with the din of the street outside.

One day some inventive genius suggested that it was about time to vary the monotony of sound, and proposed means to that desirable end.

A committee was formed to carry out his ideas, and a weak, good-natured creature (rejoicing in the nickname of "Cupidon"), constantly victimised in some way or other, was requested to lend his clothes for the purpose in view.

His coat and waistcoat were removed; but when it came to the remaining garment, he besought with tears that this portion, at least, of his attire be left him. The committee, however, deprived him of his nether covering,

## Paris

and proceeded to dress the *mannequin*, or lay-figure, in the clothes they had taken from their victim.

When they had arrayed the inanimate object to their satisfaction, they bore it to a window giving on the court; and there, whilst one of their number attached a cord to a hook outside, the others made a loop in the same rope, and put it around the neck of the lay-figure. Then they hoisted the figure out of the window and let it drop.

It remained suspended, having exactly the appearance of a man hanging.

The ladies around the court, engaged as usual in their daily exchange of news, looked with horror at the sight suddenly presented to their eyes. Their screams attracted the passers-by, and soon a crowd formed; all faces being turned upwards to the ghastly spectacle of a supposed suicide dangling in mid-air. As the throng gazed awe-struck, one of the students rushed to the window, looked distractedly at the still quivering figure, and shrieked:

“Mon Dieu; il s'est pendu!”

He was joined immediately by the others, who tore their hair, and otherwise demonstrated their sorrow in the wildest manner.

Excited people by this time filled the court, shouting to the students, bidding them cut the cord before it was too late.

“Y'a peut-etre temps d' sauver le malheureux!” they cried.

The advice, however, fell on deaf ears, as the comrades of the suicide seemed too distracted to be capable of reasonable action.

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The police now appeared on the scene. Pushing their way through the crowd, they quickly located the window, and, leaving a few men below to keep guard, entered the building.

The possibilities of police intervention had never struck the authors of the joke, and their appearance in the studio filled the students with consternation. They ignored us for the moment, rushing to the scene of the tragedy, where, whilst the others held the stiff body, one of them whipped a knife out of his pocket and cut the rope by which the supposed suicide was suspended.

They gently laid the body on the floor, and proceeded to feel the heart, to see if life were extinct or not.

As the joy of a policeman is to discover a crime or unravel an interesting *affaire*, the feelings of "MM. les Agents" may be imagined when they discovered the true nature of the *pendu*, and found themselves in presence of a farce. Our names were taken down, and we were ordered to accompany them to the "Commissaire de Police," to be dealt with as he should ordain.

Here a difficulty arose.

The luckless Cupidon demanded his clothes from off the lay-figure, protesting that he was innocent in the matter, and complaining of the inconvenience he had suffered.

Whilst imploring the policemen, our indignant comrade had remained seated, in order to cover his bare legs as much as possible with the end of his shirt.

He was, however, sternly ordered to arise and accompany the others without further delay;

## Paris

for his clothes must remain where they were until duly inspected by the Commissaire. In despair Cupidon tied his painting apron in front of him, and charged one of his friends, as he loved him, to keep close behind when they passed through the crowd.

Four policemen took up the lay-figure by arms and legs and led the way, followed by the students, the rear being brought up by other policemen. The bystanders gazed at first with awe and emotion at the supposed defunct, but the nature of the corpse soon became evident, and much merriment ensued. When, however, a back view of the owner of the clothes was perceived, shouts of laughter rang through the crowd; people hastened from all sides, and, seeing the wonderful sight, called loudly to their friends and neighbours to come also and behold it. Their remarks nearly drove the police crazy, and made the wearer of the apron wish he had never been born.

The students, delighted with the impression produced, as an artistic finish with one accord removed their hats; and, bareheaded, with grief-stricken countenances, followed, two by two, the four policemen bearing the prostrate lay-figure.

Before we reached our destination all traffic *en route* was suspended, obstructed by the crowd surrounding us, feasting its eyes now on the spurious suicide, and now on the unhappy Cupidon, whose friend basely betrayed him by keeping at a distance behind, and thus enabling the populace to enjoy a full view of the naked legs!

When later we were interviewed by the indig-

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nant Commissaire, the plight of our wretched comrade saved us from punishment.

Turning away hurriedly to sneeze, he presented to the Commissaire a back view, which totally upset the latter's gravity, already severely tried by the ludicrous appearance of the lay-figure outstretched on the table as *pièce de conviction*.

Cupidon recovered his clothes (he was pretty cold by this time), and after he had dressed we sallied forth from the station, formed again into a procession, and, bearing aloft the denuded *mannequin*, returned triumphantly to the studio.

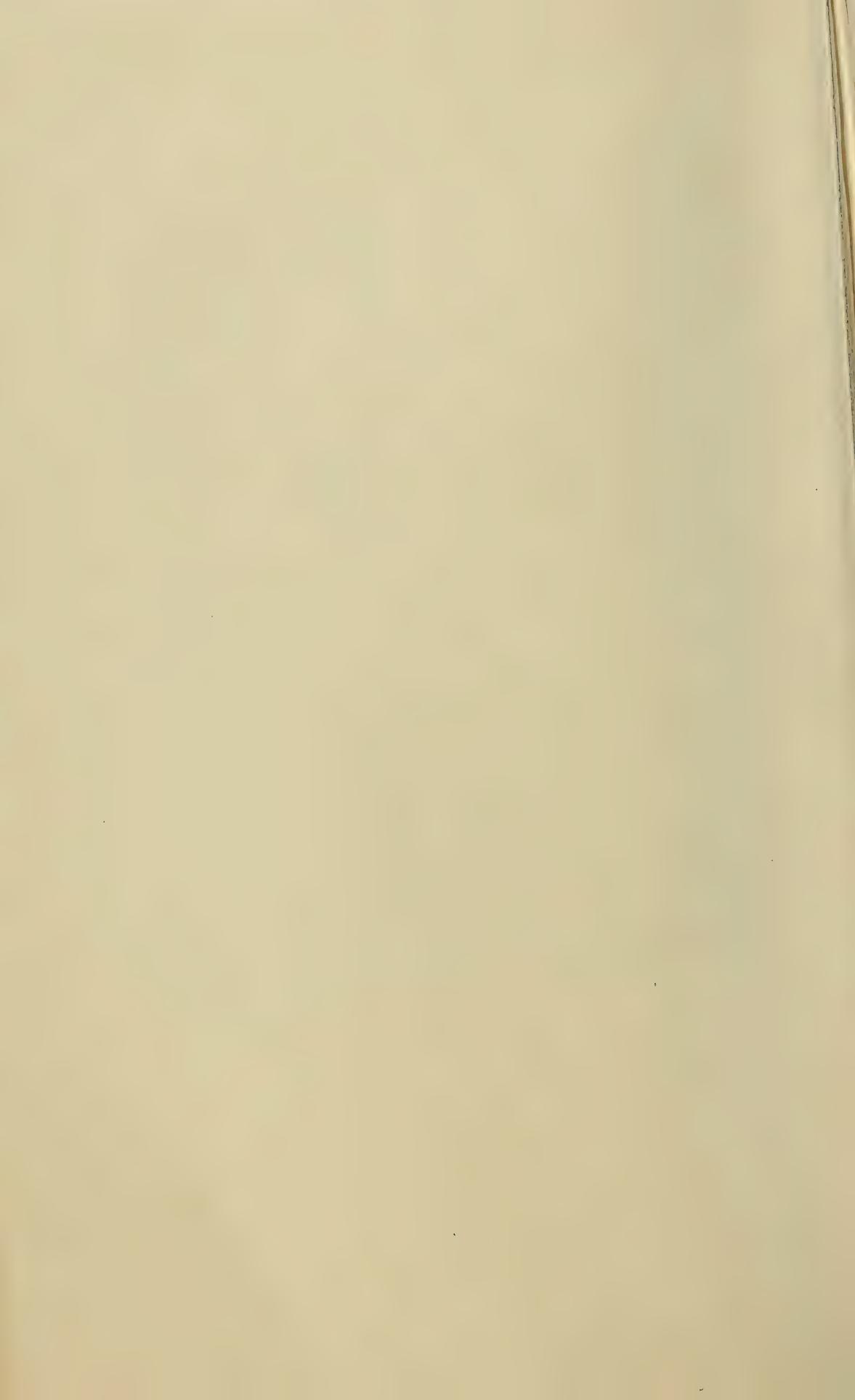
During my first year I painted a picture entitled "The Wounded Poacher," which, when finished, I sent to the Salon. It was my first serious effort, and many difficulties attended its execution. I awaited its fate at the hands of the jury with an anxious heart.

Receiving no intimation to remove it as a rejected work, but still anxious, my joy may be imagined when, just before the opening, I received a ticket for the varnishing day. One must be a young painter, full of hope and ambition, prepared, undismayed, for the worst, determined to do better next time, to realise my feelings when, with the knowledge that my maiden effort was hung in the Salon, I crossed its portals.

My heart was in my mouth as, in the room with my initial, I searched for the picture amongst the skied works, where only I supposed it could be.



THE LADY BYRON  
*A sketch*



## Paris

To look lower down never occurred to me, and I was in despair when unable to find it.

I stood dazed in the centre of the room. The varnishing ticket must have been sent to me by mistake! A cruel error, doubling my grief and disappointment.

As I thus stood transfixed with misery, a fellow-student accosted me.

“I felicitate you, mon ami!” he said.

“For what?” I replied sadly, concluding he was poking fun at me.

“Why, your picture of course. Look!” he continued, “they have placed it well.”

I followed the direction of his finger, and through misty eyes I saw my picture where, in my wildest dreams, I had never hoped to see it.

It was hung on the line!

How I passed through that day I really do not remember. It culminated in an orgy with my boon companions, which terminated with the morning light illuminating our tottering footsteps as we sought our respective abodes.

I was further gratified, later, by a favourable notice in *The Figaro*, that great art-critic Albert Wolff himself (the terror of painters) condescending to pass judgment on my immature effort.

It was the first time I saw my name in print, and the effect was intoxicating. When the Salon closed I sent my unsold picture to the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin, where in due course it was exhibited.

It was sold in Dublin, and thereby hangs a tale.

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One day I received a letter from a Mr. Vincent Scully, then unknown to me, stating that he had purchased the picture, and enclosing a cheque for double the price I asked.

I was amazed at my good fortune ; but, it being evident that Mr. Scully had made a mistake in drawing out the cheque, there was no other course open to me but to send it back with an explanatory letter.

By return of post I received his answer, re-enclosing the same cheque. It was a charming letter, telling me he considered the picture worth the money, that the extra amount would be useful to me (he was right), and to continue following the footsteps of my predecessors, who had distinguished Irish art. I have since tried to fulfil his wish to the best of my ability, and have never forgotten the delicacy of his action.

My successor as *nouveau* in the studio was an English general, who had just retired from the Indian Service, with a taste for art and a yearning for bohemianism. His genial manners and delight at his new surroundings endeared him from the moment of his entry to all the students, and in his case the usual initiation was discarded. He paid for a lavish "punch" with unlimited cake and fruits, and when the students saw that the task fatigued him they washed their own brushes. He was the only man of means amongst that impecunious crowd, as sensitive and proud as they were poor. By many deft and subtle means he found out their wants, and in the most secret manner spent a large part of his income helping them on.

He was the first to arrive at the studio and the

## Paris

last to leave, and seemed never happy when away from his new life and comrades. His artistic ability was of the slightest, but what he lacked in that respect he made up in sympathetic admiration of his friends.

He joined in all their frolics like a boy, and was the happiest and youngest of the crowd at all festive gatherings.

In bearing and appearance he was a very fine type of old English officer, but instead of having the rather superior manner not uncommon in his profession, he possessed an old-fashioned suavity and quiet dignity more frequently to be found in France, together with a loving appreciation of what was bright, fresh, and wholesome in life. Of all his brilliant career I believe the end passed with us was the happiest time.

In the early Eighties the *grisette* still existed in the Latin Quartier, and was a very captivating and helpful little body. She generally had some occupation, such as sewing and dressmaking, or was assistant in a shop, spending the evening with her artist *camarade* in the cheap restaurants and *café chantants* abounding in that district.

As a rule the *grisettes* were excellent cooks, serving in their modest and restricted *ménages* the most appetising meals on slender supplies, such as an English or American artisan's wife invariably throws away.

Now and then, when a picture was sold or some money received, there was a day's outing to Marly, St. Cloud, or some other place on the banks of the Seine; and no joy was greater than that experienced by the dainty *grisette* as she

## Recollections of a Court Painter

basked in the sunshine amongst the daisies and buttercups with her *bien-aimé*.

Times have changed, and she is now a memory of the past ; but to those who knew her she remains the ideal of youthful association.

During my second year some American students entered the studio and, with their advent, appeared a disturbing influence. One of them refused to go through the usual initiation, and the trouble which ensued gave rise to much bad feeling.

The American rarely thinks it worth his while to learn the language of the country where he resides ; consequently he is debarred from intimate association with his foreign surroundings, and not being always attracted to his British relations, ends by consorting with his own compatriots.

There is, indeed, little in common between him and the student of other nationalities, and he lacks the joyousness of nature they possess.

Of late years I have spent some time in the United States, and like all newcomers been much impressed by the absence of all *joie de vivre* in the men, apart from business matters and the chase of the dollar. It is I think this racial characteristic, retained strongly by the American student when studying abroad for a liberal profession, which raises so great a barrier between him and the youth of other countries, where different ideals exist.

The general was the first to feel the chill which affected the former genial atmosphere of the studio, and left ; whilst I, about a month afterwards, also departed.

It was then the early summer of 1881.

## Paris

A number of my French *camarades* were going to paint open-air subjects in Brittany, and I decided to accompany them. I laid in a stock of canvases and colours, met my friends on the appointed day, and we started in the happiest frame of mind for Concarneau, in Finisterre, imagining that we were going to produce most wonderful masterpieces in that paradise of painters.

## CONCARNEAU

BRITTANY

ON our way to Concarneau we stopped for a few days at Pont-Aven, where we were greeted by a number of brother-brushes whom we had known in Paris.

Pont-Aven, not far from Concarneau, is a tranquil sleepy village, with one long street, terminating in the bridge over the Aven ; the villagers, in their picturesque Breton costumes, providing the distinctive note so highly prized by painters. When in summer they arrive, laden with canvases, knapsacks, and easels, local laws and mandates are made to conform with their wishes, and the village is given up to their sweet will. Comprising all nationalities and representing every school of painting, the cosmopolitan crowd devotes itself equally to the spoiling of canvas and to a thorough enjoyment of the open-air life.

We put up at the quaint, delightful old inn, where most of the men lived. Outside the ancient porch were benches and tables, where coffee was served after meals, and drinks consumed during the day.

You crossed the threshold, and found yourself in a large spacious room, with red-tiled flooring ; an enormous fireplace, with seats inside, occupying most of the wall space at one end.

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The projecting top of the fireplace was covered with brass and copper cooking-utensils, polished like mirrors, and over the log fire was nearly always suspended, by a hook and heavy chain, an enormous iron pot.

This was the stockpot containing the daily *pottage*, which, constantly replenished, remained always simmering over the fire. Down the sides of the room ran massive oak tables, black with age, at which the meals were served, to the accompaniment of large jugs of cider.

The walls were covered with studies and pictures presented to the popular landlady (who was a kind of adopted mother to them all) by her artist guests.

Including a spotlessly clean, if modest bedroom, unlimited cider and good wholesome food, the terms per day were then only two and a half francs, which small sum, however, often exceeded the means of her boarders. In such cases she made special arrangements ; and it happened, not infrequently, that debts ran on for years. There was an instance of this in my time—the *ancien* who took the head of the table, and domineered over the household ; a man of talent, but incorrigibly lazy.

He had commenced a picture about ten years before our meeting, and was working on it then. During that time he had never paid a penny for his board, and was never even asked for it. He eventually inherited some money, and cleared up arrears ; but, loth to leave the scene of his fondest associations, he stayed on at Pont-Aven till his death, his picture being still unfinished when he passed away.

## Recollections of a Court Painter

The buxom daughters of the house, in their white coifs and picturesque Breton costumes, did the service, whilst their more amply-proportioned mother superintended the cooking, amid steam and smoke, in the big fireplace.

Not only had the girls, with their apple-red cheeks and cherry-ripe lips, to serve the meals—they were also obliged to do battle with amorous swains ; the engagement being sometimes followed by disastrous consequences, not to the maid, but to the unfortunate diner behind, on whose head the contents of the plates carried were frequently deposited.

Every meal was a feast of reason, alive with merriment and good feeling, whilst afterwards, when we took our coffee outside, the village rang with our hearty laughter.

It is pleasant to record that mine hostess waxed rich and prosperous with her artist *clientèle*. Excepting groceries, all her supplies were produced on her own farm, and as the work was done by her family, the profits from the *cabaret* assumed in a very few years important proportions in that frugal and thrifty community.

No sordid consideration underlay her kindness and consideration to the needy ones.

She enjoyed their company ; could afford the luxury of keeping them as long as they liked to remain, and knew that when they had the wherewithal, or sold a picture, she would receive her share.

Nobody came to Pont-Aven in those days excepting painters, and they regarded the place as their own private property. The village itself resembled a gigantic studio, with its picturesque

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streets full of painters at work, whilst the villagers, from long practice, were excellent models, and posed anywhere and everywhere.

The life in the open air, together with the absorbing, delightful occupation of painting from nature, followed by the pleasant reunions in the evening, constituted an ideal existence to which I know no parallel.

It was my first experience of open-air life in France, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. After a week's sojourn we left Pont-Aven, with regret, for our destination—Concarneau.

Concarneau proper is a mediæval walled city, completely surrounded by the sea at high tide. When, however, the tide was low, three-fourths of the circumference was a mass of fetid mud; the aroma from which, on a hot day, was far from fragrant.

The hotel, modern and very comfortable, was situated on the mainland, a kind of suburb to the original city, and, according to the wind, more or less free from its perfumes.

It was more expensive than the inn at Pont-Aven, but the accommodation was better, and instead of cider there was wine *ad libitum*. Cider is very pleasant to drink, but undue indulgence is very often followed by disastrous results. With wine as our beverage, we therefore rose superior to our brethren at Pont-Aven; whilst the cuisine, if not more wholesome, was perhaps more appetising. We further possessed a billiard-table, at which game the Commissaire of Police was an adept (invariably winning from the less accomplished paint-brush brigade). There was little else for him to do,

## Recollections of a Court Painter

as only an occasional drunken quarrel disturbed the peace of Concarneau. Curiously enough, women were invariably the assailants. Strongly built, with a Mongol type of countenance and unusual head-dress, they belonged to a Celtic tribe, the women of which had for generations been employed in heavy manual labour and the unloading of ships, whilst the men stayed at home to look after the family. Regularly on Saturday nights, reversing the usual order of things, these stalwart women got drunk, and whilst in that condition generally assaulted their husbands, who were physically their inferiors. I remember seeing one of these heavily-built, flat-chested women take her husband by the neck (in his folly he had answered her back) and bang his head against the wall until he howled for mercy, whilst her lady friends looked on approvingly!

The hotel was crammed with a crowd of cosmopolitan painters similar to that at Pont-Aven. During the day every man was away making studies or painting a picture; but during the evening the spirit of mischief was let loose, and all kinds of pranks were indulged in.

Amongst our number was a Swede who suffered from some dyspeptic disease. He had a phenomenal appetite, and after a heavy dinner invariably fell into a kind of stupor, an unnatural sleep, from which it was impossible to wake him.

One day a menagerie arrived in the town, and of course we all decided to go and see it after dinner. Our Swedish friend subscribed for a ticket, but fell asleep as usual after his ample repast.

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We felt it would be unjust to leave him behind, so we supported him, still sleeping, to the tent ; passed him through the entrance, and deposited him comfortably in the front seat before the lions' den.

He continued in deep slumber as we awaited the appearance of the lion tamer, and the thrilling performance of the king of beasts.

When, in time, the lion tamer appeared, the usual roaring and jumping about took place, and our friend's sleep was troubled by nightmares. Called upon to perform his act, the lord of the forest emitted roar after roar, each one more terrible than the other.

In the midst of this turmoil the Swede awoke, aroused at length by the unusual noise.

When his half-opened eyes beheld the wild beasts careering in the cage, he gave a terrified shriek and plunged into the crowd, striving with violence to escape from the horrible sight. His action created a panic, and simultaneously a frantic rush was made for the doors, one of those mad impulses so common to crowds.

Looking in amazement at the action of the spectators, the lion tamer and his pupils forgot the performance ; the latter, with their noses to the bars, roared defiance at every one, evidently longing to join in the fray.

The beasts in the other cages also upraised their voices, and in the midst of turmoil and confusion we found ourselves at last outside the tent, bruised and knocked about.

The Swede, terror-stricken, had disappeared ; and on our return to the hotel we found he had locked himself in his room, from whence came

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sounds as of a soul in agony. In the morning, at breakfast, he appeared, pale and trembling, and accounting for his disturbed appearance, said his sleep had been troubled by the most frightful dreams, and he felt a bit shaken in consequence!

About this time we determined to show some hospitality to our confrères at Pont-Aven, and accordingly invited them to the funeral of a dear friend. The departed one, we assured them, belonged to a well-known and respected family, and had left an appetising legacy to us all. We further requested them to wear mourning befitting so solemn an occasion. On the appointed day they arrived, in the most fantastic mourning habiliments that the mind of man ever conceived; some had even blacked their faces as an outward sign of poignant grief. As we were similarly apparelled and furnished, our funereal appearance, as we sat down to lunch, was a sight never to be forgotten.

Towards the end of the feast a hearse drew up at the door of the hotel, and the usual crowd gathered around, waiting for the funeral to start.

No doctor had seen the body, and a rumour came to be circulated that there had been foul play.

At any rate a surprise awaited us, when, after placing the coffin in the hearse, we formed into a procession, and with hats off had followed it about half-way up the principal street; for here we were met by our friend the Commissaire de Police, accompanied by two gendarmes.

He regretted deeply the painful duty he had to perform. From information received, he had no option but to request us to bring the coffin to

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the police station, in order that the body might be examined by a doctor and the cause of death verified. He further told us that it was merely a formality, after which we could proceed to the cemetery. As it was futile to protest, the hearse changed its course, being respectfully saluted by the crowd as it slowly wended its way to the police station. Here the coffin was reverently lifted out by the gendarmes with our assistance and placed in the Commissaire's room, the mourners grouping themselves around it, in attitudes denoting great grief, mingled with apprehension.

The doctor arrived, and in the deepest silence, broken only by an irrepressible sob, the lid of the coffin was unscrewed and removed, when the body was seen to be covered with a white cloth.

This was taken off, and, to the astonishment and indignation of the Commissaire and the doctor, a fine fat pig was exposed!

The Commissaire was furious; never within his memory had such a gross outrage been perpetrated on the majesty of the law! Never had he known such a disregard for the decencies of life, such a contemptuous insult to sanctity of Christian burial! We must all consider ourselves under arrest, to be dealt with according to the utmost rigour of the law!

When he had finished his denunciations, still muttering with rage and mortification, our spokesman stepped forward and delivered this oration :

“ Monsieur le Commissaire et chers confrères.

“ After the eloquent peroration of our distinguished friend, I wish with your permission to say a few words. He upholds with a dignity

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and sublime loftiness, which excites my admiration, the glorious traditions of those laws compiled by Justinian, and readjusted by Napoleon, to meet the requirements of the French nation.

“But, Messieurs, is our learned friend of the Police Department correct in his deductions? Is his reading of those laws correct?

“I venture to think not.

“Let us examine the point at issue.

“Forgive me if for a moment I am overcome, and drop a tear, as I contemplate the dear departed one so comfortably reposing in his last sleep.

“My emotion is past! I will take up the thread of my argument.

“Lost in the misty ages of a remote past is the ancestry of that beloved form I see before my tearful eyes, the comfort and solace of appreciative mankind.

“The first historical incident in the glorious records of his noble family is that with which perhaps a few of you are familiar. I refer to that interesting page in Holy Writ where it is recorded that, labouring under a most unjust calumny of being unclean, his remote ancestors were obliged to give hospitality to devilish spirits.

“Thankless and ungrateful for the shelter afforded, these took advantage of their hosts’ confiding natures, and urged them, by artful suggestion, down a hill to their destruction.

“No heart but one of marble can fail to be moved by that tragic story.

“Can you, Monsieur le Commissaire, blame us for showing our regard and esteem for the descendant of such heroes, so noble a friend of

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man, the chosen and beloved companion of St. Anthony, whose memory we all revere."

"Enough, Monsieur," here interposed the Commissaire; "I pray you, finish this farce."

"Your remark, Monsieur le Commissaire, wounds my feelings and strikes a discordant note. Let us rather weep and lament the illustrious dead than entertain strife."

"I have requested you to cease, Monsieur," again interrupted the enraged Commissaire; "I must now insist on your doing so."

"Alas! that I must return to such a distressing subject as the law. Might I ask you, Monsieur le Commissaire, to name the mandate of Justinian or Napoleon that we have transgressed, in wishing to give our honoured friend the burial we think proper?"

Much as he desired to punish us, realising that it would be difficult to specify of what crime or misdemeanour we had been guilty, the Commissaire, suddenly confronted by this question, was unable to answer. Our orator saw his advantage, and, raising his voice, cried in strident tones:—

"There is none such. I challenge you to produce it!"

Dominated by the tone in which this defiance was uttered, and the confident, amused faces surrounding him, the Commissaire began to suspect that the secret information he had received emanated probably from the speaker, and that he had fallen into a trap!

Fearing reprisals if he went too far, and also ridicule, which he dreaded most, he decided to change his front, and to treat the matter lightly.

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"Well, Messieurs, let us say no more about it. Finish your interment as quickly as possible, and I will join you at the hotel and drink a vermouth to the memory of our little misunderstanding."

The coffin was replaced in the hearse, and, after an edifying progress through the town, we returned to the hotel, where the funeral conveyance was discharged. The defunct was presented to mine host, and proved an interesting subject of conversation and gastronomical enjoyment for a week afterwards, whilst, needless to say, the Commissaire became oblivious to his worries, submerged in the river of Vermouth we caused to flow that evening.

A dark contrast to the bright days of insouciant gaiety, so frequent during the earlier part of my stay in Brittany, was the end of that summer in Concarneau.

Small-pox, in its most virulent form, broke out, and all the visitors fled. The summer had been excessively hot ; its heat distilling new and more penetrating odours from the fetid mud and unflushed drains in the old city.

United with the uncleanly ways of the inhabitants, these supplied the disease with the nourishment it needed ; and, once started, it wiped out half the population within a month. I had no consciousness of danger, and remained to finish my pictures.

It was, I confess, somewhat dispiriting at first to look up from your plate at lunch and see a priest leading a procession of five, ten, or even twenty coffins on its way to the cemetery ; this



LILY LADY ELLIOT



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being at regular intervals a daily occurrence, but one soon got used to it.

Some time previously the Mayor had placed at my disposal as a studio an ancient disused chapel in the old city, the light from the large Gothic window serving my purpose admirably.

At the commencement of the outbreak I invariably had a number of children in this chapel, who took it in turn to pose for a child I was painting in one of my pictures. One of them, apparently as well as usual, after posing for a short time said he was tired. I told him to lie down and rest; another took his place, and I went on with my work.

Eventually I finished my toil for the day, and proceeded to pay my young models. The little chap was still asleep. I called him to wake up and take his money, but he did not answer.

Bending down I gently lifted his head to arouse him, and as I did so my heart froze with horror.

He was dead!

The disease spread with lightning rapidity amongst the children; they died after a few hours' illness, and not a single child was living in Concarneau or its environs when its ravages ceased. At that time, and in such a remote spot, there was practically no medical attendance, and such as there was hardly deserved the name.

Five or six families, eight and ten persons in each room, would inhabit one small house, with no sanitary arrangements, and with bad water. The small-pox entered, and a week afterwards the house was empty and the graveyard replenished.

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In the midst of this terrible visitation a fire broke out in the middle of the day in the house opposite my studio. Most of its inmates had died in the epidemic ; but on the top floor, where the air was probably more salubrious, a widow and two children yet survived.

There had been three, but one had expired early that morning, the mother following its coffin to the graveyard ; when she returned the house was in flames, the two children she had left behind having overturned a lamp and set fire to the room.

The flames ran down the staircase ; nevertheless she attempted to rush up, but was unable to get further than the first floor, from the windows of which she shrieked for help.

There was a ladder in my studio long enough to reach the window, and willing hands helped to place it in position ; but as the flames were by this time both beneath and above the room, whilst the smoke was dense, no one dared to mount it.

I rushed back into the studio, tied a wet towel around my mouth and nose, and returning, ran quickly up the ladder. There was no hope of saving the children, who must have been already burnt ; the only thought in my mind was to rescue the mother.

The room was filling with smoke as I entered from the window.

Standing at the door was the mother, screaming to her silent children. The landing was on fire, and the stairs leading above already burnt away.

I tried to bring her to the window, but she refused to move, and it was evident that she was

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insane. My own position was not agreeable, as the blaze had reached the room below and I was literally caught between two fires.

I dragged her towards the window, and then she turned upon me with the fury of a maniac, accusing me of burning her offspring.

The flames were coming through the flooring, as, painfully, I pushed and dragged her towards the window, fighting every inch of the way. Her dress caught fire, but neither she nor I cared.

By a supreme effort I got her firmly against the sill, where our appearance was hailed with a shout from the crowd below. They had brought a sheet in case we jumped, and I called to them to be ready.

She had her back to the sill, which fortunately was low; and I, with my whole weight and strength, kept her tight against it until I found an opportunity to bend down, when, quickly seizing one of her legs, I pulled it up, pressing against her chest with all my might at the same time. Thus overbalanced, she fell across the sill, turning a somersault in the air before landing on the sheet below. She nearly scalped me before releasing her hold of my flowing locks, and a large proportion of them descended with her.

Poor thing! She died later in the lunatic asylum.

I remained at Concarneau until the following spring, in order to finish my pictures for the Salon, where, later, I had the pleasure of seeing two of them well placed. In April 1882 I returned to Paris, and my meeting there with Edmond de Goncourt, and especially with

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Alphonse Daudet, the great novelist, has left a vivid impression upon my mind. Rarely has even that land of genius, France, produced a son so richly endowed with talent and with personal charms. Yet the impression he made upon me was as nothing compared to the worship paid him by those who knew him intimately. To the many young authors who sought his advice he assumed the form of a demi-god, whose benign influence and comforting counsel refreshed and strengthened the most despairing soul ; and he differed from more celestial deities by also helping them materially !

I did not remain long in Paris, but with a few congenial spirits migrated to Moret, where I spent some months painting outdoor subjects.

One of our *camarades* at Moret was a confirmed *farceur*, and supplied the necessary amount of practical jokes, without which, it seems to me, looking back on those early days, that we could not exist.

Nature herself seemed to have been in a farcical humour when she formed him ; she had furnished him with a properly-proportioned body, and the legs of a child of eight.

Consequently when he got off his chair he was little higher than the table, but whilst seated appeared to be the same height as everybody else. It frequently happened at the inn that a *commis voyageur* would join the dinner table when we were all engaged at that meal. Our *farceur* would engage in conversation with the stranger, eventually pick a quarrel, and then challenge him to mortal combat. The stranger, properly resenting this treatment, would

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be further maddened by the insinuation that he was afraid to hit a man of his own size. Rising from his seat, enraged and anxious to demonstrate his efficiency in that respect, the *commis voyageur* would call on the traducer to stand up, that he might the more conveniently knock him down! When, however, the little man jumped down from his chair and squared for the fight, the astonishment and amazement of his opponent were beyond words, and the episode generally ended in drinks all round. He was a very clever painter, and the most delightful companion to work with; his joyous nature and overflowing animal spirits contributing an element of unfailing merriment.

One morning we went by train to Gray for a day's sketching, and at the station got into line at the ticket office with a number of peasants and farmers behind. Our little friend was in front of our party, and when his turn came to buy a ticket, he could just see over the *guichet* as he asked in a deep bass voice for a half ticket, third class, to Gray. The employé looked at him indignantly, remarking sarcastically that he must feel tired kneeling down.

“Be careful, young man, be careful in your remarks,” retorted our friend.

“Assez, monsieur, take your ticket and pass on.”

“Jamais de la vie! I want a half ticket.”

“You can't have it. Stand up, monsieur, and cease wasting my time.”

The train was coming in, and the crowd behind became impatient, some exclaiming:

“Nous allons manquer le train.”

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“Avancez donc ! monsieur.”

“Nom de dieu, dépêchez-vous !”

He turned for a second and regarded the crowd.

“Messieurs,” he said in pompous tones, “I stand on my rights, as a citizen of this great republic ; I will not be browbeaten.”

Again he addressed the ticket-seller, who raged behind the *guichet*.

“Jeune homme. I will report you to my friends, the directors of this line. Give me a fourth class ticket, as you decline my request for a half third.”

“Grand bon Dieu ! il est fou !” ejaculated the exasperated clerk.

“Don’t swear at me, young man,” said the little imp, shaking his finger at the clerk. “I warn you to be careful. I ask you again, give me a—”

“But there is no such thing !” roared the ticket-seller.

“Why isn’t there ? Now answer calmly, what excuse is there for— ?”

He never finished his tirade. We were pushed on by the now angry people behind, grabbed our tickets from the fuming clerk, and just caught the train ! The little *farceur*, minus his ticket, paid his fare in the train quite contentedly, delivering at the same time, to the guard and passengers, an address on the iniquity of the Government in not providing fourth class accommodation for deserving citizens.

Moret is an ancient walled town on the fringe of the forest of Fontainebleau. The quaint old

## Concarneau

inn formed part of the strong tower which formerly defended the principal gate leading to the river which flowed at its foot. In a room in this tower was the cage in which Cardinal Balue was confined by Louis XI. Made of thick oaken bars, with a small entrance heavily padlocked and secured by strong iron bolts, it was so constructed that its wretched occupant could neither stand up nor lie down at full length. History records that Louis XI. visited the Cardinal after the latter had been for many years incarcerated in this cage, for the express purpose of taunting and scoffing at the unhappy prisoner. With the accumulated dirt of all those years encrusted on his doubled frame, with dishevelled grey hair, tangled beard, and only a few rags remaining around his suffering body, the Cardinal must have presented a gruesome spectacle; as, crouching on hands and knees, he implored the clemency of the sneering king. If the walls of that cell could only speak what a tale of agony they would unfold!

Outside my bedroom in the inn was a balcony, suspended over the river; and here a tragedy of a different order had occurred about fifteen years previously. A pleasure party of four ladies and four men came from Paris for a few days' outing, one of the couples occupying my room. Lunch was served on the balcony, then a very ancient construction, and the eight friends, in the gayest of humours, sat down to enjoy their meal. In the midst of their merriment the balcony suddenly gave way and fell, precipitating the company below. These were the days of large crinolines. As the ladies fell, their crino-

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lines became inflated with air, and they glided, more or less uninjured, to the boulders underneath. The men, on the contrary, were all killed. No more disconsolate souls ever returned to Paris than the survivors of that pleasure party to Moret.

It was whilst painting at Moret that one of my friends expressed his intention of going to Florence to study the early Florentine School, and there and then I decided to accompany him. We arranged to start in the autumn, after our summer's work was done. In September we left Paris for Italy. I was then twenty-two, and little imagined as Paris disappeared that I was leaving my pleasant student life and the good old vagabonding existence behind me for ever. A new period, more interesting and responsible, was opening before me, filled with a new order of associations, new aspirations and ideals. The future, however, did not pre-occupy me as I stepped out on the platform at Florence, and first set foot in that historic city—the Cradle of European Art.

## FLORENCE

### I

OUR warmest welcome came from the mosquitos of Florence; I mean, of course, the lady mosquitos, the vegetarian gentlemen of that genus having no motive for seeking human society. We stopped at a hotel in the Piazza della Trinita, and, after supper, weary with our long journey, my companion and I sought a peaceful night's rest. Dropping with sleep as we undressed, we both neglected to draw the mosquito curtains around the beds; in fact at that time we did not quite understand their use. As soon as I was comfortably settled between the sheets, I fell into the deepest slumber, my friend, who occupied a bed at the other end of the large room, already snoring before I passed into dreamland. I must have slept for some hours when I was awakened by an unusual sound, and a singularly painful sensation. The sound came from my companion, who was groaning and cursing, whilst my face, neck, and wrists were tingling with pain. A strange buzzing filled the air as I struck a match and lit my candle to see what was the matter. The place was alive with mosquitos. My hands and arms were a mass of blisters, and when I looked at myself in the

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glass, the object I saw there gave me quite a shock. Bad as my plight was, my companion's was worse. When I turned my attention to him, he was sitting on the side of the bed in an attitude of despair. Poor fellow! he had not been in good health, and in consequence the mosquitos evidently found him a more savoury morsel than myself. His face seemed double its normal size, swollen and disfigured beyond all recognition. He could not open his eyes, and his lips were in a terrible state. Altogether he presented a pitiable sight; and I forgot my own troubles in trying to assuage his. We were, however, helpless in the face of an enemy who persistently continued to attack us. The mosquitos seemed to know we were at their mercy—no fluency of language or abuse affected their courage or audacity; one assailant being killed, a dozen voracious heroines, undismayed, attacked the same point. The battle lasted until morning, when the vanquished, our poor selves, had a respite; the enemy retiring about that time to digest and to rest, after their orgy and the ensuing fray. I soon recovered from the effects of the bites, but my companion, blind and in great suffering, had to be taken to a hospital, where he remained for three weeks.

Since that first meeting mosquitos in various parts of the world have sought my society with flattering assiduity. After receiving from them all the most signal marks of attachment, I have come to the conclusion that the Florentine branch of the family is, perhaps, the most lavishly generous in its attentions to a stranger; young and old surround the appetising newcomer, bent on instilling the nectar they have especially reserved for

## Florence

his benefit, and tenderly awaking him from his slumbers to listen to their joyful hymn of welcome!

During the winter I spent much time in the Pitti and Uffizzi galleries, copying and otherwise studying the Florentine school of painting. My companion (who, after his initial experience, never took kindly to Florence) early in the following spring drifted on to Rome, and I was left alone.

My studio in the Via Ghibellina formed part of the ancient convent of the Murati, having been in former years either a chapel or refectory. One day, driving a nail into the whitewashed wall to hang up a picture, a portion of the whitewash cracked off, and a fresco underneath was revealed. I had all the covering material cleared away, and a very fine work occupying the entire wall was exposed to view. It was of the early Florentine school, but by whom painted I never discovered.

The Murati (the word means walled in) were nuns who, in pious zeal to achieve sanctity and to avoid the temptations of the flesh, had themselves immured in narrow cells, only a small aperture being left through which food and drink were passed. There, without light or ventilation, amidst foulness inconceivable, these demented women passed their existence, "from scalp to sole one slough and crust of *sin*," in their own mistaken view, and certainly of uncleanness, until death released them from their self-imposed sufferings.

The cells of this order, in olden days, ran along one of the principal bridges across the Arno; a bridge long since demolished, but of which the

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Ponte Vecchio, still edged with its ancient houses, gives one a good idea.

Here, from small pigeon-holes placed at regular intervals in the blank wall, were out-thrust skinny hands with claw-like nails, begrimed with the dirt of years, mutely imploring the charity of the passers-by—and not in vain; these wretched women often living to a great age, the fact was deemed miraculous (as it indeed was under such awful conditions), and a proof of their sanctity. Hence generous alms were contributed, and the unseen recipients implored, in return, to bestow on the donors a lover, a child, or any other coveted possession.

When at length the soul of the Murati nun escaped from its noisome shell, a portion of the wall was broken down, and the unsightly human derelict brought forth for burial; which took place with much pomp and ceremonial. The cell was then prepared for a new occupant, who, in her turn, to the accompaniment of singing and pious rejoicing, entered the living grave.

Poor visionaries! passing the long, long hours in alternate anguish and ecstasy, as did St. Simeon Stylites, wrestling with sin on his pillar for thrice ten years! Nowadays people afflicted with religious mania are relegated to insane asylums; and, after all, it is a more humane way of dealing with these mental aberrations than fostering such delusions by recognition of sanctity.

The name of my street, Via Ghibellina, inevitably recalls the strife and internecine warfare which rent Florence in mediæval times; the bitter struggle between the two great factions, the Guelphs

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and the Ghibellines—the people against the nobles. The latter were principally of German origin, descendants of the different captains who accompanied Charlemagne and the later German Emperors on their several marauding expeditions into Italy. A large number of these freebooters settled in Tuscany, where they built castles, and divided up the conquered land between them. (As a matter of fact, I believe only a very few of the old Italian families are not descended from the Goths and Germans; and the fair type prevails amongst them to the present day.) By force of arms they became the governing class, and eventually the aristocracy of the country. In course of time the wealthy citizens of Florence also formed themselves into a "petite noblesse," and were called Guelphs, whilst the older feudal families took the name of Ghibellines.

There was constant friction between the two parties, but the bitter period of the feud originated in the following incident. Efforts had been made to effect a reconciliation between the conflicting elements, and a marriage arranged to forward that end. This marriage was to take place between Buondelmonte, a Ghibelline noble, and a daughter of the Guelph house of Amidei. The story is quoted from an ancient chronicle. "But when all the preliminaries were concluded the wife of Forese Donati called Buondelmonte to her and said, 'Oh! shameful knight, to take to wife a woman of the Uberti and Fifanti. 'Twere better and worthier to chose this bride.'

" So saying she pointed to her own daughter. Buondelmonte accepted the offer, and, forsaking his betrothed, speedily married the girl.

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“ It was the Easter day of 1215. The handsome young knight Buondelmonte, elegantly attired, and with a wreath on his head, mounted his white horse and crossed from Oltrarno by the old bridge. He had reached the statue of Mars when he was suddenly attacked. Schiatta degli Uberti hurled him to the ground with a blow from his mace, and the other conspirators quickly fell upon him, and severed his veins with their knives. Afterwards the corpse was placed on a bier, the bride supporting the head of her murdered husband ; and both carried in procession round the city, to move men to fresh deeds of hatred and revenge.”

In 1260 a battle was fought near Sienna, when the Guelphs were practically annihilated. It was estimated that Florence lost in dead, wounded, and captives nearly thirty thousand of her best citizens, the most dreadful calamity that had ever befallen the city. On this occasion the Ghibellines were aided by German troops, commanded by a Count Giordano, who nominated Count Guido Novello podesta of Florence for two years. During the latter’s period of office he demolished the ancient houses and castles then obstructing the way, in order to construct a straight road from the Communal Palace to the city walls.

That street was called the Via Ghibellina.

The Communal Palace, or Palace of the Podesta, also called the Bargello, is a prominent feature of the Via Ghibellina ; its imposing, castellated tower dominating the street. In its courtyard is, perhaps, the most picturesque staircase in Florence ; and within its walls were enacted some of the most thrilling scenes of

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Florentine history. Many an illustrious Florentine was beheaded in the courtyard, and in an adjoining cell are to be seen the chain and ring by which a distinguished citizen was chained to the wall for thirty long and weary years. When, in 1343, the Medici overthrew the Communal Government, the Podesta was besieged in the Bargello. His administration of justice had been remarkable for its cruelty, and in consequence both he and his subordinates were hated by the populace. The supply of food failing, he was obliged by hunger to open negotiations with the besiegers. He offered to surrender on condition that his life was spared; and he further agreed to hand over to the infuriated citizens the principal instruments of his cruelty, a father and son, who had carried out his orders with excessive harshness. The terms were accepted, and the two men delivered up to the tender mercies of the mob. Then was perpetrated perhaps the most revolting horror that stains the annals of Florence. Still living, the terror-stricken wretches were torn, limb by limb, in pieces; the fragments of the bodies being afterwards stuck on pikes and lances. With these bloody remains held aloft the savage crowd paraded the streets of Florence, howling triumphantly, as they raised their pikes towards the women and children in the windows, for the closer inspection of the gruesome burdens they carried.

In 1478 the Bargello presented another tragic spectacle to the people of Florence. On the 26th of April in that year Giuliano de' Medici was murdered in the Duomo or Cathedral of

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Florence. The Pazzi conurbation, responsible for this deed, was inspired by Pope Sixtus IV. and his nephew, Giovanni della Rovere, who were anxious for political reasons to destroy the Medici family. The other conspirators were Francesco de' Pazzi, Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa, and Giambattista Montesecchio. The first design was to lure the brothers Medici to Rome, and kill them there. They, however, suspecting foul play, declined the Pope's invitation, and the plot fell through. Francesco de' Pazzi and Archbishop Salviati then decided to go to Florence, and choose a moment there for the deed. Bandini, a professional assassin, and Francesco de' Pazzi were chosen to kill Giuliano; Montesecchio undertook to dispose of Lorenzo de' Medici. On April the 26th the two brothers would attend mass in the Duomo, and that date was appointed for the deed. The elevation of the Host was to be the signal for a combined assault. When the Medici arrived at the Cathedral, the murderers embraced Giuliano, and discovered, to their satisfaction, that this youth had left his secret coat of mail at home. An unforeseen difficulty, however, arose for the conspirators at the last moment. Montesecchio, cut-throat as he was, refused to stab Lorenzo before the high altar. Nevertheless a substitute was found who, to quote the chronicle, "being a priest, was more accustomed to the place, and therefore less superstitious about its sanctity." At the very moment of the elevation of Christ's body, Giuliano de' Medici was stabbed to death by Bandini and Pazzi. The priest, however, failed to strike home; and Lorenzo escaped with a slight wound. The

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conspiracy had collapsed. Archbishop Salviati, together with Jacopo and Francesco de' Pazzi, and some of the other conspirators, were hanged from the windows of the Bargello. Sixtus, beside himself with rage when he heard of the failure and the hanging of Archbishop Salviati, vented his exasperation by excommunicating the people of Florence.

The house belonging to Michel Angelo, in the Via Ghibellina, which he inhabited for so many years of his life, was presented to the City of Florence in 1858 by a direct descendant of the illustrious artist. It contains many mementos of his intimate life, and in its internal arrangement, furniture and appointments, is practically the same as it was 400 years ago. I passed the door every day, and spent many a thoughtful hour in the peaceful interior. Seated in Michel Angelo's small study, near the desk on which he wrote so many of his beautiful sonnets, the centuries disappeared, and the mighty presence of the great man himself again filled the room. You saw him in fancy, with his roughly-marked, careworn face, sitting by that table, pen in hand, lost in contemplation, as his thoughts wandered back to Rome and the one great passion of his life, the Princess Colonna. She it was who inspired the loftiest creations of his poetic muse, remaining enthroned in his heart as the perfect ideal of womanhood. A still greater master of verse, inspired by an equally noble devotion for the beautiful Beatrice, the Divine Dante, was born in a narrow street near by. Proud as the Florentines are of Dante to-day, their forebears

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showed little appreciation of his greatness, or consideration for his feelings, when they drove him out of Florence, to seek refuge in Ravenna, where he died. After Dante's death, however, they had the grace to erect a magnificent monument to his memory in the Church of Santa Croce; at the same time soliciting the people of Ravenna to give up the body of the illustrious dead.

"You exiled Dante when in life, and set a price upon his head. With us he found a home and grave, and here he shall remain for ever," was the answer vouchsafed by Ravenna. There accordingly amongst his friends the divine poet continues to sleep undisturbed.

What a galaxy of genius and talent, in art alone, the name of Florence conjures up. Fra Angelico, Fra Bartolomeo, Carlo Dolci, Andrea Del Sarto, Donatello, Ghiberti, whose beautiful bronze doors were pronounced by Michel Angelo worthy to be the gates of Paradise; Giotto, whose graceful tower, never excelled, adjoins the magnificent Duomo of Brunelleschi, one of the greatest architects of all time.

What a brilliant constellation in the artistic firmament is represented by Michel Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Benvenuto Cellini, who, alone, by their great mental attainments and varied genius, would reflect eternal glory on any city! But art did not exhaust the prolific soil of Florence.

We have the great names of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, in poetry; Macchiavelli, and Amerigo Vespucci, the discoverer; Galileo, the astronomer, who, when old and blind, was

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visited in Florence by Milton, then about thirty, soon to be afflicted with blindness himself. In short the list of great men in every profession is endless; and no other city in the world can produce from the past so imposing a procession of intellectual giants.

Before I leave the abode of the Gods I must repeat the story, not often told, of Michel Angelo and Pope Paul II. As with Pope Julius, Michel Angelo had frequent quarrels with His Holiness, and at the period of the story their relations were somewhat strained. He was then painting "The Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel. One day a certain Biagio di Casena, a favourite of the Pope's, made some impertinent remarks on the work which offended Michel Angelo. In revenge for the insult he painted the portrait of Biagio on one of the damned souls roasting in hell. Furious with rage, when he heard of this proceeding, Biagio hurried to His Holiness, to whom he related his wrongs, at the same time imploring the Pontiff to punish the offender.

"Where did you say he had placed you?" asked Pope Paul, when the aggrieved courtier made his complaint.

"In hell," replied Biagio.

"I am sorry to hear it," said His Holiness gravely; "if it had been in Purgatory something might be done, but in hell I have no jurisdiction."

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## II

The greatest Florentine festival is that of the "Santo Spirito," celebrated yearly in the Cathedral.

Drawn by four white oxen garlanded with flowers, preceded by clergy and singing choir-boys, followed by excited crowds, the carrocio, a large pyramidal car, comes slowly through the streets of Florence, and takes up its position at the principal entrance to the Duomo.

This car is a reproduction of the war-chariot of the Florentines which in ancient times accompanied the troops to battle, and, displaying the National Standard, was the rallying point of the soldiers and the headquarters of the general in command. Behind it came the martinella, another chariot, whose large bell rang out the orders for the forces.

When the carrocio has drawn up amidst the seething multitudes on the piazza, a wire is affixed to it, and, the other end being firmly attached to the High Altar in the Cathedral, drawn tight about eight feet above the ground. All is now in readiness, and High Mass is said. As the bell tinkles, at the supreme and most solemn moment, the door of the sanctuary opens, and a large emblematic white dove, with wings outstretched and tail of fire, issues forth, apparently flying along the wire. With a swish like a rocket it dashes out, leaving a trail of sparks behind it, touches the carrocio and returns to the altar, thence a second time to fly towards the chariot, whilst all hold their breath. For this is the crucial instant. The sacred fire which animated the dove should



*Painted 1887*

H.S.H. THE DUKE OF TECK



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now ignite a train of gunpowder communicating with innumerable crackers and fireworks covering the carrocio, and cause them to go off, amidst the rejoicings and acclamations of the multitude, who regard this display as a sign of divine favour, be-tokening a plenteous harvest.

Unfortunately it has been found necessary for some time past to ensure the right performance of this miraculous ceremony by human intervention, and the contractor who supplies the carrocio and other adjuncts is supposed to take proper precautions. Presumably he had neglected these, for on three occasions previous to the year when I witnessed the festival it had been an ignominious failure, the "Santo Spirito" refusing to perform its part.

This gave rise to much dissatisfaction, agricultural values declined, church contributions fell off to an alarming extent; the latter fact deciding the clerical powers to take action, and resort to the mundane expedient of prosecuting the unreliable contractor.

He was condemned in court to pay a heavy fine, the judges considering that he was prejudicing the welfare of Florence, and warned that any further lapse on his part would be even more severely punished.

The action had been of absorbing interest to the Florentines, and that year, 1883, the ceremony of the "San Spirito" was awaited with more than usual eagerness, and the city was thronged with *contadini* from all the country round.

I heard the matter openly discussed as I wandered amongst the crowd, and so strange a thing is superstition, that believers and unbelievers

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appeared equally anxious for the performance, miraculous or otherwise, to take place successfully.

The carrocio starts from the Palace of the Pazzi, who are intimately associated with the Festa; for a member of that family conveyed from Palestine the holy fire which, borne by the dove, plays so important a part therein. An early chronicle relates that Pazzino di Pazzi, one of the Crusaders who, in 1085, took part in the siege of Jerusalem, brought this holy fire from the sepulchre of Christ, seated on a donkey, his face turned towards its tail, deeming himself unworthy to ride upon the beast as his master had ridden. In this awkward position, it is gravely stated, Pazzino made the long journey from Syria to Florence, holding the sacred light in his hand, never weary of contemplating its beauty. (This story probably explains the family name—Pazzi, meaning crazy or mad.) According to another writer, Pazzino brought back three flints—now in the church of Santissimi Apostoli—which emit divine sparks, and which he discovered in the holy sepulchre. It seems a strange place to have found flints in, but apparently nothing was impossible to the guileless Pazzino.

I followed the huge chariot, edging my way laboriously through the throng, and secured a good place beside it on the piazza, where I awaited events with much interest. Would the contractor continue to leave matters to Providence, or had he learned that heaven helps those who aid themselves; and to rely less on celestial co-operation, and more on his own ingenuity? I felt sure that this would prove

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to be the case; and, desiring to see in what manner the trick would be performed, I watched him intently.

The crowd was wild with excitement, and muttered dire threats in the event of another fiasco occurring. At last the dove appeared, gleaming white in the great open doorway, showers of sparks from its tail illuminating for a moment the dark interior of the Cathedral. It dashed into the carrocio, turned, disappeared into the Duomo, reappeared, and amidst profound silence, broken only by the swishing noise of its tail, touched the carrocio for the last time, and vanished. Then on the faces of those near the great chariot might be read disappointment and indignation. *The gunpowder had not ignited!* But, instantly, before they could speak, I heard a quick order given, followed by the sound of striking matches; whilst, to my observant eye, hands were visible busily lighting the crackers through innumerable holes in the chariot; one by one the fireworks went off with loud reports, and the pent-up feelings of the multitude found relief in a roar of exultation which rent the skies!

The miracle was consummated, to every one's entire satisfaction.

With complacent pride the contractor received the affectionate congratulations of his friends. He was conscious of having done a good day's work. Determined this time to take no risks, he had erected a scaffolding in the interior of the carrocio (drilling, at the same time, holes in its outside framework), and had stationed reliable assistants therein ready, match in hand,

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to obey the signal I had heard, and thus checkmate the wilful contrariness of the “Santo Spirito.”

The curious point in connection with this event was that every soul in Florence knew, within twenty-four hours, how it had been accomplished ; but the fact in no way diminished their belief in its divine origin, and pious delight in the results obtained.

There are many other quaint and curious religious festivals in Tuscany, mostly of Pagan origin. One of the most interesting is certainly that of Sienna, where the yearly blessing of the Horse in the Cathedral attracts a multitude to that city. Comparatively few foreigners, however, have witnessed this strange ceremony, for it takes place in the heat of the summer when the tourist season is over.

The celebration dates back to Caligula, who, after deifying his favourite horse Encinitus, erected a temple and appointed a priesthood for his worship in the city of Sienna. When the pagan gods were replaced by the Christian religion, it was found impossible to eradicate the devotion of the people of Sienna towards this cult ; and, consequently, the early fathers were obliged to introduce the horse the Siennese adored above all other gods into the ceremonies of the new religion.

In modern times the desirability of abolishing the festival has often been mooted, but the fear of disturbance, or even worse, has so far deterred the Church authorities from intervening. Personally, I should regret the passing away of an

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ancient tradition, and a picturesque commemoration, which, undoubtedly, rejoices the hearts of the good Siennese, and gives them much pious enjoyment.

The vast area of the Cathedral Square, where the horse races are held, was filled with an animated gay crowd. I stationed myself near the Cathedral doorway, awaiting the arrival of the procession, in order to follow it into the Cathedral. Presently, in the distance, was heard the singing of hymns, and soon after the procession slowly advanced into the square. Little at first was to be seen above the heads of the crowd but banners held aloft, as it wended its way around the square towards the Cathedral. Soon, however, the acolytes, swinging censers, came in view, followed by singing choir-boys and a large number of priests in full canonicals, also singing, whilst under a gorgeous canopy came, last of all, the Archbishop. Immediately behind him appeared the most interesting part of the procession.

This was a magnificent thorough-bred stallion, milky-white in colour and covered with garlands of flowers. With distended nostrils and arched neck, from time to time he proudly tossed his handsome head in the air, the personification of virility, strength and grace. With tender solicitude his grooms soothed and reassured him as he passed through the delighted, admiring multitude until the Cathedral door was reached. There the superb creature got restive, evidently alarmed at the dark interior and the throng within. Eventually he was coaxed to enter, sniffing suspiciously at the strong odour of incense which filled the

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edifice, whilst the principal citizens who had walked behind him in the cortege crowded in also. Anxious now to see the ceremony inside, I joined their ranks, and found myself in a good place not far distant from the pulpit. The stallion was stationed before the High Altar, where the light from the candles evidently added to his fears. High Mass was said, and at the solemn moment when the Host is raised the Archbishop stepped forward and, raising his hands, blessed the noble animal, sprinkling him with holy water. This benediction completed the agitation of the recipient. No sooner had the water touched him than, with a bound, he stood on his hind legs, with front hoofs beating the air, as if defying the Archbishop, who retreated in alarm, to repeat the sacred proceeding. The ceremony was at an end. Restive and impatient to get out, the stallion was led forth into the sunshine again. He was now (to the accompaniment of shouts of joy, and followed by all the urchins of the city) conducted back in triumph to his stable, where, burying his nose in a good feed of oats, he soon forgot the thrilling emotions he had experienced during his morning's deification !

### III

In the late autumn of 1883 I was presented to H.S.H. the Duke of Teck. We happened to meet at the English Club, and Major Light, the President, with whom I was speaking when the Duke entered the room, very kindly made the presentation. The handsome presence and pleasant manners of H.S.H. at once won my admira-

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tion, and as he remained in genial conversation with me for some time, I was impressed by his unaffected simplicity of manner and bearing. Later, when the Duke did me the honour to present me to the Duchess, I had an opportunity of contemplating the same quality in its perfection, added to the charm and grace which distinguished H.R.H., her greatness of heart and brilliant intellect ; this made her beloved by all those privileged to bask in the sunshine of her presence.

I was fortunate enough to be admitted into the small circle of intimate friends which surrounded the Duchess ; the irresistible spell fell over me, and I laid my most respectful homage at her royal feet.

The household over which the Duchess reigned was the happiest imaginable. Surrounded by her children, H.R.H. was the youngest in feeling and brightest of all, her laugh the merriest, her wit and perception the quickest, whilst she watched over their welfare with tender maternal solicitude. Princess May, afterwards to become Queen Mary of England, was then entering on her seventeenth year. As mother and daughter were inseparable companions, the shyness and reserve which distinguished the young Princess were, perhaps, more marked by contrast with the open genial manner of the Duchess. She possessed, however, her royal mother's sense of humour and quickness of observation. Tall, slight, and graceful, her pretty features resembled those of the Duchess, although lacking in that mobility of expression which lent such a charm to H.R.H.'s face. Even at this early age she exhibited a remarkable maturity and soundness of judgment—a judgment

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on which her mother relied, and which, later, guided most of H.R.H.'s actions ; for, as time went on, the gentle influence exercised by Princess May became more marked, and it was easy to perceive that, underneath her maidenly reserve, there was developing the quiet determination of a *maitresse femme*.

When at Christmas the Princes Adolphus and Francis arrived from school in England, they, together with Prince Algernon, completed the family circle.

Prince Algernon was a dear, charming boy ; resembling his father in face, in figure he seemed likely to take after his mother, a tendency which disappeared as he grew up. The Duchess's proportions were undoubtedly ample, but this did not detract from the dignity of her carriage ; and what was noticeable in H.R.H. was her quickness of movement and lightness of foot. In embonpoint the Princess altogether yielded the palm to her friend, Miss Helen Henniker, who once ardently desired the post of lady-in-waiting to H.R.H. When spoken to on the subject, the gracious Princess was much amused, and laughingly replied, " I should be delighted, but no carriage that was ever built could carry Helen and myself."

Soon after we met the Duke of Teck sat to me for his portrait, and our acquaintance ripened into a warm friendship. The sittings ended, we frequently went for a walk together, either in the Cascine or into the country, our way enlivened by discussing subjects on which, of course, our views rarely agreed, for I was imbued with radical ideas acquired when a student in Paris,

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believing profoundly in the subversive doctrines of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and expounded my theories with all the enthusiasm of youth. The wide divergence of our opinions, however, did not affect my cordial relations with H.S.H.

Late in February 1884 the Duke paid a short visit to England, and on his return called at my studio in the afternoon, and we went for our usual walk together. The Duke was apparently in the best of health and spirits when I left him, at the conclusion of our stroll, at his own door. My surprise and sorrow may therefore be imagined when next morning I was informed that H.S.H. had been stricken during the night by paralysis, the doctor ascribing the attack to sunstroke. He, however, cheered and comforted Princess Mary by stating that the Duke would recover and be himself again. A fortnight later, on March the 15th, I received the following note from H.R.H. :—

“ H. THADDEUS JONES, Esq.,<sup>1</sup>  
At Studio,  
7 Lung Arno Guicciardini.

“ DEAR MR. JONES,—The Duke will be alone this evening, as he insists on my going to the theatre (Salvini), and he would much like you to look in upon him after your dinner, if possible. Are you free? I shall call at the studio at 3½, as arranged.—Very truly yours,

“ M. A.”

<sup>1</sup> Some little time later I assumed my Christian name of Thaddeus as my surname.

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The appointment in my studio alluded to referred to a proposed sitting for the Duchess's portrait, the progress of which had been retarded by the Duke's illness. When I saw H.S.H. that evening I was distressed beyond words at his altered appearance, but he was very cheerful, and it required little effort on my part to distract his attention with amusing gossip. The doctor was not quite correct in his diagnosis. The Duke eventually recovered the use of his limbs, and his face resumed its normal aspect, but he was never really the same man again. Later in the same month Princess Mary received a second and equally unexpected shock which caused H.R.H. profound grief. On March 28th a telegram informed one of her friends that Prince Leopold had died suddenly on that day, and, later, Mr. Colnaghi, the British Consul, confirmed the news. The Duchess was prostrated by the sad tidings, and sent me a note in which the following passage occurs, countermanding a sitting for the same afternoon :—

“ We are heartbroken, for he was our favourite ; so good and true to us all, and he is gone from us so awfully suddenly that I can scarcely at all realise the terrible fact.”

A few days after the receipt of this letter I heard that the Duke, accompanied by his physician, Dr. Baldwin, had been taken to the Villa Stibbert, a feudal castle charmingly situated on the heights overlooking Florence, where he might enjoy the purer mountain air, so necessary to his returning strength. Mr. Stibbert was an enthusiastic collector of bric-à-brac, and his villa was famous above all for its collection of ancient

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armour. I accompanied the Duchess when, with her children, she visited her husband in his new quarters. We found him most comfortably installed in a bright and charming apartment, and already much benefited by the change ; nothing that Mr. Stibbert could do being left undone for the pleasure and comfort of his distinguished guest. The larger portion of the villa was devoted to Stibbert's collection, the great hall being filled with dummy knights and warriors of the Middle Ages in every conceivable style of armour, the knights on well-carved horses, caparisoned cap-à-pie. The other reception rooms were filled with *objets d'art* and pictures, the *tout-ensemble* resembling a remarkably well-kept museum. When he died, Mr. Stibbert bequeathed the villa and its contents to the city of Florence, but for some reason or other the civic authorities declined to accept the bequest. Whilst the Duke was sojourning at the Villa Stibbert, H.R.H. decided to move from the Hotel Paoli to the villa, situated some miles from Florence, which had been placed at her disposal by Miss Bianca Light, and early in April the Duke rejoined the Duchess there. Surrounded by pleasant gardens and magnificent cedar-trees, from which the villa took its name, "I Cedri" was an ideal residence for the Duchess and her family, as well as a most desirable retreat for the Duke during his convalescence. Before leaving Florence H.R.H. gave me the concluding sitting for her portrait, which, together with that of the Duke, I sent to the Royal Academy, where they were exhibited the following May.

Amongst other portraits I was engaged upon

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were those of the four daughters of the Duchess of Madrid, who, having separated from her husband, Don Carlos of Spain, resided in Florence, her native city (H.R.H. being a daughter of the Grand Ducal House of Tuscany). Don Carlos lived in Venice, where he enjoyed the life most suited to his tastes.

I had about this period some pupils to whom I devoted my leisure moments, but more important work soon obliged me to dissolve the class. One of these students, Henry Savage Landor, has since attained celebrity, and is a world-famous traveller; but in those early days his genius lay chiefly in the way of practical jokes, of which I was frequently the victim.

I resided then with Mrs. Smillie, an elderly Scotch lady, who, having lost her children, had more or less adopted me, and, I fear, found me at times a very wayward son. Endowed *au fond* with a most affectionate heart, Mother S. had yet a trenchant, masterful way of dealing with people in general, and was easily aroused to aggressive action. My Celtic disposition, impatient under control, inclined somewhat in the same direction, so, whether from prudence or affection for me, after my first revolt against despotic rule, Scotland lowered her flag to Ireland and peace reigned in the household.

Mrs. Smillie's nephew, William Sharp, afterwards to achieve fame as a poet under the *nom de plume* of "Fionna Macleod," together with his maiden aunt, a sister of Mrs. Smillie's, spent the winter of 1883 with us in Florence. Singularly enough for a Scotchman, Willie Sharp brimmed over with gaiety and fun, his impulsive,

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enthusiastic nature being entirely free from the virtues which sit so heavily on his race.

His aunt Peg, however, atoned for this remissness by possessing them all, together with a spirit of contrariness and combativeness which passed all understanding ; any allusion to an ancient family feud between the sisters being sufficient to make her bristle with warlike ardour and rush into action.

Desiring one day to post some letters herself, she asked Mrs. Smillie the way to the post-office, and on receiving the information went out accompanied by her nephew. At the door she took the opposite direction to the one indicated. Sharp pointed out her mistake, and she turned on him angrily.

“Wullie Sharp,” she exclaimed, “understand once for all that I will *not* be dictated to by Eliza Jane.”

Thereupon she continued to march the wrong way, followed by her reluctant and protesting escort. Some hours later, not having posted her letters, she returned with Sharp in a very aggrieved state of mind, and it was evident at dinner that night that a new grievance had arisen to disturb her peace.

When I presented Mrs. Smillie to Princess Mary, H.R.H. quickly recognised her great qualities of heart and mind ; and in her correspondence with me frequently alludes to Mother S. in terms of great esteem and regard. These sentiments were more than reciprocated by my adopted mother. Nothing could exceed the loyalty and devotion of her feelings towards H.R.H., nor the fond appreciation of the royal friendship displayed towards her.

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At I Cedri Princess Mary enjoyed that open-air life which she loved best of all, writing in the garden amongst the flowers, or playing with her children on the lawn.

Her gracious goodness and interest in my affairs continued unabated, as is evidenced by the following note regarding a visit to Lady Crawford, to whom I was under an obligation, but whom I did not know:—

"I CEDRI, May 2, 1884.

"DEAR MR. JONES,—Can you be ready by 5/4 this afternoon to accompany Algy up to Villa Palmieri, as I should so like to present you to Lady Crawford that you may thank her for her kind exertions in your behalf. Algy will call towards 4 for reply. Please put on black cut-away.—In haste, sincerely yours, M. A."

At the Villa Palmieri H.R.H. and Princess May were received by Lady Crawford, her daughters, the ladies Jane and Mabel Lindsay, and some others staying in the house. After tea Lady Crawford conducted her royal guest over the villa, formerly the favourite summer residence of the Medicean family, its many imposing features and artistic details impressing both the Duchess and Princess May. From the house we went into the gardens, most beautifully laid out, commanding a magnificent view of Florence and the country around. It was here, perhaps, that Princess Mary, inhaling the delicious perfume of the flowers, enjoyed the pleasantest moment of her visit. In this charming villa the late Queen

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Victoria resided when, two years later, H.M. paid Florence a visit.

As we drove back from the Villa Palmieri Princess Mary told me of the arrival in Florence of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and that H.R.H. was coming to dine at I Cedri the following night, Saturday, May 3rd. I was invited to stay over the week-end, and to come early in the afternoon, as there was to be a tennis party after tea, in which the Duchess wished to take part.

Those Saturday dinner-parties had already become a feature at I Cedri, and were remarkable for their whole-hearted gaiety ; they could not be otherwise with so genial and gracious a hostess as Princess Mary. The fact that the Duke had sufficiently recovered to take his place at table conduced materially to H.R.H.'s happiness. After dinner the Duchess, who possessed a sweet sympathetic voice, invariably sang some ballads, the evenings being otherwise enlivened by charades, games, and sometimes by a small dance.

When I arrived at I Cedri I found a number of mutual friends at tea with the Duchess and Princess May ; and when they had taken their leave the game of tennis was arranged, H.R.H. and Miss Bianca Light *versus* Prince Algy and myself.

Supple and slight as Miss Light was, she was excelled in agility and quickness of service by her royal partner who, when eventually the game was decided against the sterner sex, was immensely pleased. When we assembled later in the evening for dinner, besides the Duke and

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Duchess, Princess May and Prince Algy, there were present Major Light, his sister, and myself, representing the week-end house party. The other guests arriving from Florence were Lord and Lady Windsor, Prince Wolkonski, Baron Dmitri de Benckendorf, Mr. Peter Wells, and Mr. Marzials the composer. With the arrival of the Grand Duke, accompanied by his equerry, Baron von Gundlach, the party was complete, and after the usual presentations Princess Mary, with her guest of honour, led the way into the dining-room. The Grand Duke's commanding presence and kindly sympathetic manner impressed us all, as we were presented, whilst during dinner his happy turn of mind, pleasant conversation and youthful enjoyment of the moment charmed our hearts. In his attractive personality H.R.H. closely resembled Princess Mary, and as I gazed across the table at her happy face I understood the affection and regard the Duchess felt towards her august relative. Later on there was music. Princess Mary sang some charming ballads to Marzials' accompaniment, and Benckendorf, who possessed a rich baritone voice, as well as Wolkonski, contributed songs. After the Grand Duke's departure, and when the other guests had left for Florence, Prince Wolkonski remained behind by special request. He had composed a Russian song for H.R.H., and the Duchess wished to go over it with him. Wolkonski was an accomplished pianist—in fact, desired to make it his profession, and was never so happy as when seated before a piano. On this occasion both he and the Duchess, exhilarated and inspired by the pleasure of the evening, sang

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and played with unusual verve and feeling, delighting the few present until the small hours, when H.R.H. gave the signal to retire.

### IV

My meeting with the Grand Duke at I Cedri laid the foundation of a great and mutual friendship, which only terminated with his sad and tragic end twelve years later. During the fortnight he remained at Florence the Grand Duke showed me great kindness, and I was much in his society. His visit concluded, H.R.H. left for Bellagio on the Lake of Como, accompanied by Baron de Benckendorf and myself.

Notwithstanding the fact that I was travelling with the Grand Duke, Princess Mary, aware of the scarcity on Italian lines, was solicitous about my material comfort on the journey. From Bellagio I wrote to H.R.H., and I quote the following from her gracious reply :—

“I CEDRI, *May 20th.*

“Do tell me did you take your coat with you in the compartment, into the pockets of which Mother S. stuffed, at my suggestion, all the food, cake, and oranges for your support as far as Bologna? or was it left behind? How well you write, with so much Irish humour and poetry in the description of the scenery, your life, &c.”

The week passed with the Grand Duke at Bellagio was a delightful experience. The days

## Recollections of a Court Painter

passed only too quickly. Pleasant drives and excursions on the lake filled our time until dinner, after which we were rowed on the lake, followed by another boat filled with musicians, who sang and played the guitar, whilst the lady moon, in the zenith of her glory, shed her soft rays upon us.

When our party broke up and a few days after the Grand Duke left (some sketches begun having detained me at Bellagio), I received a letter from H.R.H. which I forwarded to Princess Mary, who, acknowledging its receipt, writes:—

“Thanks so very much for sending me that charming letter from the Grand Duke, of which both the writer and recipient can be justly proud, and which you must always keep. I could not resist a laugh over your misadventures at starting. How like you to leave everything to the very very last. . . . We lunched with Mr. Wells, F. (the Duke) joining us there, and met Mrs. Ross and Tharp. I found her very pleasant, and not so loud as I had been led to expect. . . . Mr. Wells’ apartment is indeed charming, but we nearly died of the heat, and eat, one could not. We then called on Mother S., she having written to me to explain that, owing to its being a ‘Giorna di Festa,’ she had found it impossible to have the studio cleaned out that morning, but would see to its being thoroughly done next day.”

When I returned to Florence my studio was in wonderful order, everything unusually tidy, so much so that it took me nearly a week to get accustomed to the change, and I was nearly distracted trying to find necessary articles carefully

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stowed away. My servant, a most patriarchal-looking person with long flowing white beard and hair, had up to the time of this visitation and cleaning up a more or less easy berth, varying his light services by sometimes posing for me. He possessed an unusually refined cast of countenance which, framed by the mass of white hair and beard, powerfully impressed my visitors as he opened the door, making them feel as if they were entering a sanctuary. Notwithstanding his impressive appearance, however, he was the degenerate son of a great Italian scientist, Raddi, a man of European renown in the earlier part of the century. He once showed me a ring, one of the few possessions left him by his father. It contained a large multi-coloured stone. This stone, Raddi assured me, was the concentrated essence of a human body, his father having discovered a chemical medium by which he reduced a corpse to these slender proportions. The idea of wearing such a ring I commend to those in search of a new sensation.

As I have said, Raddi had an easy berth until Mother S. appeared on the scene during my absence, and when the cleaning up took place she evidently made him work as he had never worked before. At any rate his reflections on the dear lady were tinged with bitterness.

“Corpo di Cristo,” he cried in petulant tones, when I asked him for something I could not find, “how do I know where it is. The lady Mother came and upset everything. She alone knows where it is. Oh Madonna mia,” he continued, gazing imploringly at the ceiling, “che donna, che donna.”

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My stay in Florence was, however, brief. The few matters I had to attend to I quickly disposed of, and towards the end of the month I left for London, where my portraits of H.R.H. and the Duke of Teck were on exhibition. The Duchess furnished me with letters of introduction to her mother, the Duchess of Cambridge, her sister, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, as well as to Lady Hopetoun, Lady Holland, and others of her friends.

Whilst in London I resided with Mr. Percy ffrench, who, having plenty of spare room in his house in Lower Grosvenor Place, very kindly invited me to stay with him. He was a friend of Princess Mary's, and I had known him well in Florence.

Percy ffrench had been for many years in the diplomatic service. Speaking fluently all the principal languages, he was at home in every capital in Europe, being perhaps the best known man in cosmopolitan society. He remembered piquant details regarding every social scandal, and was familiar with all the political incidents of the past decade; and this remarkable memory, combined with great conversational powers, rendered him a most entertaining companion. In face he much resembled the portraits of Henri IV., on account of which likeness, doubtless, he entertained a pious regard for the memory of that monarch. In body he was frail and thin in the extreme.

"Mon Dieu! comme il est maigre, notre ami ffrench," said a friend to me once. He had been to see Percy in the morning, and

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as the matter was pressing, was received by the latter whilst in his bath. "Je t'assure que j'ai vu l'eau a travers son corps."

At a garden party at Holland House I was presented by ffrench to Lady Holland (who had previously received my letter), one of the few surviving "grandes dames" of the early Victorian period. Lady Holland was failing in health at the time, but still delighted in bright society and agreeable dinner-parties; particularly in the latter, over which she presided, saying and eating little, but evidently enjoying pleasure in the conversation and company of her guests. We dined at Holland House several times, meeting there some of the most brilliant people in London. I wrote my appreciation of our hostess and Holland House to Princess Mary, then recently arrived at Seelisberg, on the Lake of Lucerne. In her answer H.R.H. writes regarding her friend:—

"HOTEL SONNENBERG,  
SEELISBERG, July 12, 1884.

"Charmed at your having been to see dearest Lady Holland, one of my kindest, dearest friends and staunchest partisans, and at your appreciation of delicious Holland House. Thanks for your two letters, and all they contain of interest, and above all for the welcome news that you obey my summons and will be with us in a week. F. (the Duke) is enchanted, has already telegraphed to you, I believe, and looked out a small room for you adjoining ours, which is still free. It has, alas! not the view,

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but as you will scarcely ever occupy it except at night that will not matter, and the being near us will compensate for other deficiencies I hope. On wet days, when we cannot go out, there is always my nice cosy sitting-room to fall back on. . . . Our apartment is in the front house, the one nearest to you, as you look at the picture [a view of the hotel enclosed] and boasts a long balcony. We dine and sup in the bay window of the verandah you see in the large building in the back, which verandah extends along the huge table d'hôte dining-room, in which 200 people feed at meal times. You cannot imagine the noise and clatter they make, but you will dine and sup at our separate table, which is very snug and *à part* in the window. Baldwin (the doctor) *se fait attendre*, and we have as yet no news of him. The chicks send the kindest of messages, and are delighted at the prospect of having you here. Bibi (Prince Algy) sends particular love . . . I hope you had a happy day with the boys, dear darlings! on Thursday; so dear of you to have gone down to see them." [The young princes Adolphus and Francis were then studying at Wellington College, and at their mother's request I had paid them a visit.]

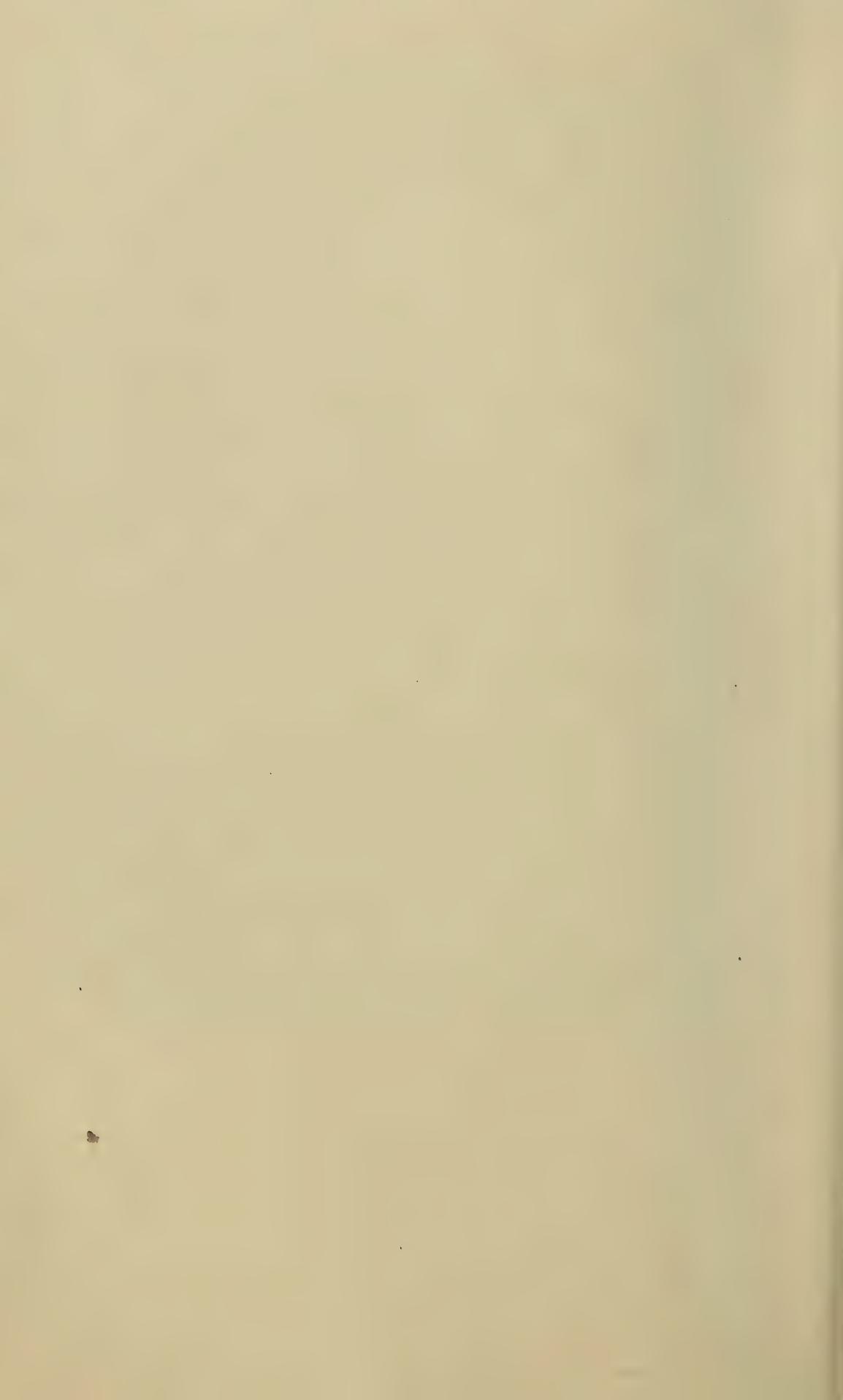
## V

I presented at St. James's Palace the letters from Princess Mary to her august mother and to her sister, and after a short interval I had



*Painted 1881*

H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF TECK



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the honour of an audience with the venerable Duchess of Cambridge, then approaching ninety years of age. When ushered into her presence I perceived H.R.H. propped up by pillows, reclining on a couch. As I stooped to kiss her hand, she regarded me with a kindly maternal smile, evidently predisposed in my favour. Notwithstanding the Duchess's great age and bodily infirmity, her mind was remarkably clear, and she took a keen interest in current events. When H.R.H. had concluded her inquiries regarding her royal daughter and grandchildren in Florence, she referred to the burning question of the moment, Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, a subject which seemed to interest her greatly. To my surprise, the venerable Duchess spoke most admirably of Mr. Gladstone, being therefore, to my knowledge, the only member of the Royal Family who did not positively hate that statesman; neither did H.R.H. share the alarm with which the Bill was regarded by the Royal Family and the Conservative Party; on the contrary, she deplored their bitter opposition to the measure.

"Home Rule must come some day," said the Duchess with emphasis, "and I should rather see it given to-day with a good grace than grudgingly to-morrow."

H.R.H. next alluded to Lord Beaconsfield, and the wish he once entertained of conferring on the Duke and Duchess of Teck the vice-royalty of Ireland, a prospect which delighted both Princess Mary and her husband. When, however, the proposal was placed before the late Queen Victoria, her Majesty would not allow

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the appointment, on the ground that it was an entirely new departure.

On 20th July 1884 I left London to rejoin at Seelisberg the Duke and Duchess of Teck, and I received from them, and from their children, a most gracious and cordial welcome. With her usual charming thoughtfulness H.R.H. had transformed, with some flowers and odds and ends, the small, sparsely-furnished bedroom I was to occupy into quite a charming one. The hotel was overcrowded, principally with German tourists, many of whom slept on improvised beds of various kinds; whilst the noise and loud talking resounded through the uncarpeted corridors from daylight till midnight.

Despite these disadvantages we passed a very happy time at Seelisberg, the Duke regaining his strength rapidly in the invigorating mountain air. Mr. Peter Wells had joined the family from Florence before my arrival, and on 3rd August the Princes Adolphus and Francis arrived from England, rejoicing their mother's heart by their fine and healthy appearance. Commendatore Corrodi, the distinguished landscape painter, with his charming wife, sometimes dined with the Duke and Duchess. Corrodi was a *persona gratissima* with most of the royalties of Europe, and besides her beauty, Madame Corrodi possessed a charming voice.

Soon after the young princes arrived, the family left Seelisberg for Bad Horn, on the Lake of Constance, accompanied by Peter Wells and myself.

Mr. Peter Wells was a great favourite of the Duke and Duchess, and especially of the chil-

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dren, who loved to play on him pranks and boyish jokes, to which he smilingly submitted. With his silvery white hair and clean-shaven contented countenance, Peter Wells was the most benevolent-looking epicurean I have ever met. His kindly nature, united with ingratiating manners, endeared him to a large circle of lady friends, whilst his one desire in life was to fit as many parties as possible into one night, after attending most of the afternoon tea fights in Florence. A widower, possessing ample means, he enjoyed perhaps the pleasantest form of existence—the serene, agreeable, untrammelled life of a consummate egoist. He was the original of the character of “Silvery Bells” in *In a Winter City* by Ouida, and is faithfully depicted in that once popular novel.

We spent some hours at Lucerne before our train for Bad Horn started, seeing the famous Lion and other sights, consequently were all tired when we entered the carriage of several compartments placed at the disposal of our large party. As Lucerne disappeared in the distance, hampers were produced, and their appetising contents proved most acceptable. After the repast was finished, the Duke and myself retired to the next compartment to enjoy a cigar, Peter Wells, a non-smoker, remaining with the ladies.

The rumbling of the train soon acted on us both as a sort of lullaby, and gently we fell into the arms of Morpheus. My dreams, however, were soon disturbed by the most hideous nightmares, and foul odours from abysmal depths seemed to arise and stifle me! I awoke, sat up, and something dropped on the ground. I picked

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it up ; it was a piece of Limburger cheese ! Those who are familiar with the pestilential odour of Limburger cheese will understand my feelings as I arose in wrath, looking for the evildoer who had taken advantage of my slumbers to place a piece under my nose. The Duke was sleeping peacefully in his corner. I looked in the next compartment ; there everything was just as I left it—Princess May and her mother talking with Peter Wells, little Algy asleep near them, a picture of peaceful innocence impossible to associate with the misdeed.

As I gazed, my troubled expression led to inquiries if anything were the matter. I held out at arm's length the offending morsel of Limburger cheese, and approaching the group invited their closer inspection of it, in order that they might realise the distressful story I had to relate. Instead of that sympathy, however, for which my soul yearned, general hilarity and cries of "throw the dreadful thing out of the window" greeted my tale, whilst smothered sounds outside the compartment raised a suspicion in my mind that two juvenile members of the party, not present, were "les vrais coupables," and then exulting over their victim's discomfiture. When later they appeared and caught my reproachful eye, a look of angelic guilelessness came over their faces, and, with Machiavellian solicitude, they inquired if I had had a pleasant sleep !

On our arrival at Bad Horn the Duke and Duchess were met by H.R.H. Prince William of Wurtemberg, a cousin of the Duke's, accompanied by his equerry, Hauptmann von Roeder.

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After the family greetings were over and Peter Wells and I presented to the Prince, the Duchess and Princess May drove to the Hotel Bad Horn, not far off, whilst we followed on foot.

Prince William was then on a visit to his mother, Princess Catharine of Wurtemberg, at the Villa Seefeld, situated a few miles from the hotel. After the Duke and Duchess, together with their children, had paid their visit *de cérémonie* to the Princess, H.R.H. very graciously included Peter Wells and myself in a dinner party given at Seefeld in their honour.

Princess Catharine, who possessed a most gentle and kindly nature, seemed to me when first presented somewhat austere in manner, but this impression disappeared entirely as the evening advanced. Prince William, who was kindness and affability personified, still mourned the loss of his wife, a sister of the Queen of Holland and Duchess of Albany, to whom he had been most tenderly attached, lavishing all his affection on a little daughter, Pauline (now Princess of Wied), a sweet and charming child.

After dinner I was called upon to do some tricks with cards before our royal hostess, tricks with which I had previously amused the Duchess. I did so in fear and trembling. When I came to the well-known three-card trick, H.R.H. tried in vain to find the right card. As I continued to mystify her the august features relaxed with amused wonder, the severe expression disappeared, and eventually Princess Catharine leaned back in her chair and laughed heartily. That three-card trick was the "Open Sesame" to the heart of Princess Catharine, in whose favour I

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rose high, and on subsequent visits to Seefeld we soon became absorbed in the game, H.R.H. sometimes so far forgetting her scruples as to bet on the chosen card. Towards the members of the household, however, the habitual austerity of their august mistress did not relax, and as at last they began to believe there was some magic in the cards, in the charity of my heart I taught them secretly the mysteries of the game.

The Duchess of Hamilton, *née* Princess Marie of Baden, also resided in the neighbourhood of Bad Horn, together with her daughter, the Countess de Festitics, formerly Princess of Monaco.

It was after dinner at the Duchess of Hamilton's that I was present for the first time at a table-rapping séance. There were present our hostess, Madame de Festitics, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, some other guests, Peter Wells and myself. We all sat around the great mahogany dining-table, which it would probably have taken half-a-dozen men to move about, and we joined hands. Dead silence prevailed, and presently the table began to quiver slightly, the movements increasing gradually until it began to sway in quick convulsive jerks, such as no human power could produce with so heavy a weight. Several questions were asked, and answered by the number of jerks; the movements becoming so violent at last that we were obliged to rise from our seats, still keeping our hands in place, and follow its jumping progress around the room. Suddenly it lurched in Princess Mary's direction, who got entangled in her gown, tripped and fell, with the edge of the massive table upon her. Most fortu-

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nately she was not hurt, although it took our united strength to raise the table on its centre leg again. I have been present at many séances since, but have never experienced such violent movements of the table as distinguished that occasion.

At Bad Horn I painted a portrait of Princess May, an open-air effect, with the Lake of Constance in the distance. Her early girlhood just past, the young Princess was then entering a still more attractive period of her life, and, besides being a singularly charming subject, was a most patient and sympathetic sitter.

Whilst I was engaged on this portrait, Prince William arranged a little *fête* at Seefeld, a performance of "ombres chinoises," in which some of us were to perform after dinner. The coach-house had been transformed into a temporary theatre ; a white sheet being drawn across the front of the stage, and the action of the play represented through the medium of shadows thrown on the sheet by the actors behind. Prince William was cast for a *chef de cuisine*, and wore the best cap and apron of his mother's *chef*. My part was that of a harlequin, to fill which character I simply divested myself of my evening dress, modesty obliging me to add that I retained my under-clothes, which in the form of a shadow represented tights. The Prince's equerry, von Roeder, was cast for columbine. His costume was the same as mine, with the addition of short skirts cut out of paper, suggesting the tender sex he represented, whilst a hastily made wig of hay heightened the illusion. The Duke of Teck superintended the lamp which threw our shadows on the sheet, and on him

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devolved the duty of general stage manager. A board was placed on a level with the reflector, so that its shadow appeared to the audience on the other side to be a rope on which, when my cue was given, I appeared dancing and brandishing my paper sword, whilst Columbine coquettishly advanced from the other side of the stage. After executing some dances interspersed with shadowy expressions of ardent love, our meeting was disturbed by the jealous *chef* who, following Columbine, expressed his rage on the sheet by blood-curdling gestures with a carving knife. It then became my part to rescue Columbine and engage in mortal combat with her angry lover. This sanguinary fight was to have been the *clou* of the evening, but fate ordained otherwise. The Duke of Teck so far was suffocating with laughter at the ludicrous sight we presented, but when he saw the gentle Prince William advance to slay me, at the same time striving to keep his balance on the board, he fell over the lamp, which broke, and in a twinkling the stage was ablaze. At first the audience thought the sudden flare up was part of the play, but they were soon undeceived, and precipitately retired.

In a vain effort to put out the fire we worked like Trojans with buckets of water, and later when weary and thirsty we returned to the Villa, our begrimed nondescript attire and general appearance gave rise to merry peals of laughter, in which Princess Catharine and the Duchess heartily joined.

## Florence

### VI

In August the great cavalry manœuvres took place on the plains of Wurtemberg, and Prince William left Bad Horn to direct the operations. H.R.H. very kindly invited me to be present at the review ; accordingly in turn I took my leave, planning to rejoin my gracious friends later in the year at Florence. In the following letter from the Duchess of Teck there is an interesting word-picture of Friedrichshafen, where I had the privilege in later years of spending many pleasant summers with King William of Wurtemberg. (I may mention that on one of those visits to Friedrichshafen I had the honour and pleasure of meeting Count Zeppelin, then engaged on the construction of his first airship, on the Lake of Constance, at a point some miles from the Schloss. H.M. King William drove me to the landing-place facing the workshop (a kind of Noah's Ark some way out in the lake), where Count Zeppelin in a launch was awaiting us. The Queen and suite, who had preceded us, were already in this aquatic workshop awaiting the King. The Count, then only on the threshold of his great fame, received us with the happy smile of one whose dreams are coming true, and as the launch raced through the water I noticed with surprise that the revolving screw was in the air, and asked him the reason.

"That screw," he replied, "represents the propelling power of my airship." My admiration at the Count's ingenuity was increased to amazement when I later gazed on the colossal

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proportions of the ship itself, the framework of which was only then in a finished state.)

"BAD HORN, Sept. 5th, 1884.

"... Came tidings of you through Willie's kind pen, Catharine having yesterday heard from him. So you reached Marienwahl (Prince William's villa) all right; actually got up next morning to see the manœuvres, were enchanted with all you saw, and in the afternoon set to work in good earnest on the picture (portrait of Princess Pauline), the child enjoying *de poser* and sitting well. . . . Alas! you had rain at the manœuvres."

Rain! It was more like a deluge than rain! The march past was taking place—I seated in a Victoria stationed behind Prince William at the saluting point—when the heavens seemed to open and down came the rain like a cataract, converting in a few minutes the great ploughed plain into a morass, which under the charging horses soon liquefied into a sea of mud. The plight of the officers in their handsome parade uniforms was pitiable in the extreme, as, wet to the skin and covered with mud, they galloped past, whilst poor Prince William, steadfast at his post, received more than his complement of mud as the squadrons swept by. When at last the proceedings ended, and H.R.H. turned his horse homewards, followed by the once brilliant suite, it seemed like a moving cavalcade moulded in brown clay, horses and riders being unrecognisable under the thick coating of mud they carried.

My gracious correspondent continues:—

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"On Tuesday we took the 11.25 boat across to Friedrichshafen ; we were our family party of six, all very smart, I in the brown and gold-braid toilette. The day was perfect, quite summer. We touched at the little town of Langenarges, passing close to the château of Montfort, belonging to Princess Louise of Prussia, which stands out in the lake. The *Christoph*, the steamer which took us all to Mainau, and in which you crossed last Monday, was in the harbour at Friedrichshafen. The château was once a monastery, and early in the present century was bought by Catharine's grandfather, who occupied it as shooting quarters, her father converting it to its present use as a summer and autumn residence, and altering it and re-arranging it in 1821 or so. It is therefore quite out of the common, having been originally built as an accessory to the church ; with the two towers which it is, so to say, fitted on to, and with its loggias and long verandah makes a charming country place. But oh, the stiffness of its inmates ! We were received by the lady-in-waiting and a gentleman, and conducted to an apartment prepared for us. Here May and I sat in state, twirling our thumbs, until at 1½ the King (uncle of Prince William) paid me a visit ; we had arrived before 1. He has greatly aged, seems very suffering, walks with a stick and drags one leg after him. He evidently wished to be amiable, and was very kind in manner to the children, whom we presented to him. After a bit the Queen (late Queen Olga of Wurtemberg) sent word she was ready, and he took us all to her apartment, which was close to ours. 'Grande embrassade et

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conversation forcée,' and I was glad when she took me about her sitting-room and dressing-room to show me the pictures, most of them gems of the modern school. We then descended to *déjeuner* at 2; quite a dinner and excellent (how you would have enjoyed it!), with la suite à 18 personnes, the only other guest being an old Count Adlerberg, who was aide-de-camp en chef, and always about the person of the late Emperor, and with whom Queen Olga of course makes a great fuss. They then showed me the garden, the King taking me about himself, which is beautifully laid out with pergolas, &c., somewhat in the Italian style, and on which he has of late years spent a great deal. There is an open loggia on the lake, which commands a lovely view of the mountains."

When Prince William succeeded his uncle on the throne of Wurtemberg he converted this loggia into an *al fresco* dining-room, the dinner table running its entire length. When he dines there the King is seated at one end of the table, the Queen facing H.M. at the other, the suite and guests occupying the side facing the lake and mountains, in much the same order as that represented by Leonardo da Vinci in the Last Supper. When illuminated by the setting sun the view is beyond words beautiful.

The letter proceeds:—

"His Majesty then took leave of me, as he had to rest, and the Queen having 'congédié la suite,' accompanied me to my rooms and paid me her visit. She tried to be civil and amiable, but she and I have little or nothing in common. We,

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however, were thoroughly in accord about our dear Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin ; and she rejoiced my heart by saying how much more charming and distinguished he was than his father, and that her niece *Anastasie s'épanouit* (unfolds like a tender flower) in the genial warmth of his devoted love. After 4 she too departed to rest, and we drove around, accompanied by two of the gentlemen, by a farm on the lake at which in old days the Court often took tea when F. was a boy, where Peter was awaiting us, and I breathed freely once more, the stiff formal visit being over. . . . We reached Rorschach after 6, and called at Seefeld to report all about our visit, intending to sup at home, but when we got there we found our pot-house in a perfect whirl of bustle and noise, and fifty-two wedding guests, quite a grand affair ; the bride attired in white satin, dancing away and shaking our floors ; so, in dismay and disgust, for the musicians were playing in our dining-room, I sent for the carriage and we all returned to Seefeld, F., who had been walking with Peter, dropping in later, where Catharine gave us an impromptu cold supper. I afterwards made myself useful, sorting the cards which had all got mixed by tricks, and pressing into shape those your fingers had bent. How Catharine enjoyed those tricks ! You are a great favourite with her, I find."

Her Royal Highness goes on to describe a visit to Ragatz, a word picture which illustrates well the happy facility of her pen, and her appreciation of the picturesque in nature. Joined by

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Princess Catharine of Wurtemberg at Rorschach,  
H.R.H. entered the train for Ragatz.

“ . . . The line passes under Wartegg, the Parma place we drove to on Sunday, winds on by the lake, and turns off at the corner, leaving Bregenz to the left, into a broad valley, bounded on one side by a chain of Swiss, on the other by the Austrian, mountains ; the higher peaks snow-capped. The scenery is really beautiful, and becomes grander and grander as one proceeds. On several of the lower hills are the picturesque ruins of the robber knights of the Middle Ages. Luckily we had the whole carriage, consisting of three compartments, to ourselves, so that we could fly from window to window and feast our eyes on the scenery to our hearts' content. In consequence of a long delay at Sargans, a junction, and the last station before Ragatz, it was past two ere we reached our destination. We drove in a small omnibus that just took in five of us through the pretty little town, composed of hotels situated in very well-laid-out gardens, pensions, and small lodging-houses for the use of the 'Kur' guests (Ragatz being now such a fashionable watering-place) to the Quellenhof, the best hotel in the place, and certainly a most delightful one, standing in a garden (into which many of the rooms open) that adjoins the promenade in which stands the Kur-saal, and where the band plays. Here Catharine treated us to a most excellent dinner, after which the four chicks, Peter and I drove in two *einspanner* to Bad Pfäfers, a bath some way off, with hot springs. The road to it runs along the side of

## Florence

a very narrow valley, or gorge, through which rushed over a rocky bed the river Tamina. Do you remember our last great walk when at Sonnenberg, and the grand steep mountain-side we so much admired? If so, picture to yourself just such a grand mountain-side rising above the Tamina, and darkening the glen, while the road, which winds along by and under rocks on the other side of the river, reminded me, only on a much smaller scale, of the beautiful Oxenstrasse, the wonderful road we traversed with you that runs between Brunnen and Fluelen. At the very end of the narrow valley stands the hotel or pension Pfäfers, chiefly frequented by the middle classes and the poor. Here we got out, and passing through the passages of the long rambling building came out upon the narrowest and most marvellous gorge in Europe; so says Peter. Here the Tamina has literally forced its way between the rocks which all but touch overhead, and rushes by with the roar of a torrent condensed. We walked to the end of the gorge, a path of planks very wet in parts, and then entered a small tunnel, in which we were nearly baked and suffocated, at the end of which is the hot steaming mineral spring, 10 ft. deep, the waters of which are so good and restoring for the limbs. It was certainly a most interesting expedition, and I would not have missed seeing Pfäfers for anything. We drove back, the boys jumping down to gather the lovely deep blue gentians by the way, and straight to the station, where the others joined us."

My royal and gracious correspondent soon

## Recollections of a Court Painter

after this visit to Pfäfers left Bad Horn with her family for Gmunden, from whence she wrote me news of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

"HOTEL GOLDENES,  
SCHIFF-GMUNDEN, Nov. 7th, 1884.

"... Our Grand Duke is at Baden, there awaiting the fiat of his doctor, whom he has sent to Cannes to see for himself whether or not it will be safe for our friend to winter there, he himself being strongly opposed to any of the out-of-the-way places proposed—Corfu, Meran, the Crimea; the long journey to which last-named place he dreads. If, as I imagine, Cannes is finally decided on in obedience to his wishes, which I think more than likely, the cholera having almost disappeared from Toulon and Marseilles, I feel that you will most naturally go there in January instead of coming on to us, and I therefore ask you to spend Christmas with your Cedri friends, and finish the work still on hand at Florence."

I had the honour of spending Christmas with H.R.H., and the following spring in Cannes with the Grand Duke, to which latter visit I shall refer again.

"... How you would admire the lovely lake on which my windows look! Shut in on three sides by mountains, some grey, rocky and barren, as you love them, others wooded and now a blaze of crimson and gold autumn tints. The more distant mountains are already covered with snow, for after three weeks of almost summer weather we

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had it very chilly, with sleet in the town and a powdering of snow on the woods, and quite half down to the lake early in October, since which time autumn has held undisputed sway, save when at intervals the approach of winter makes itself unmistakably felt . . . . Our once repeated descent of the rapids in the Traun River I shall never forget, for it was without exception the most delightful sensation I ever experienced ; and there was just enough danger about it, for one passes close by the great falls of the Traun, a miniature Schaffhausen, to make it most exciting. . . . One day we went to the very end of the lake in a steamer, and there took the train, through a most picturesque bit of mountain scenery by Ischl to Anssee, which lies in a valley at the foot of a perfect circle of mountains, and near a small lovely lake of the same name. Here we paid a visit to some cousins who were staying at a charming cottage, Orné, lent them by a relative. Since then I have astonished every one by climbing to the tip-top of a mountain, accompanying and following the shooting party on foot for upwards of three hours, uphill and downhill, through swampy places and down the green slippery or mossy mountain-side. . . . Only think, F. (the Duke) has been out shooting several times, and it has done him no harm ; on the contrary, good. On the first occasion he killed two roebucks and three hares, and as he only shot off his gun eight times that day, you will admit he did very well. It has quite put him in spirits about himself. In September we had two charming dances in honour of two birthdays given by my widowed cousin, at which the young people most thoroughly enjoyed

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themselves, and May looked her prettiest in a lovely toilette of white over pale blue (a kind gift from the hostess) and was very much fêted. . . . I received a number of bows, which were distributed in the cotillons. . . . Perhaps the greatest charm of the existence here is the *vie de famille* they lead, which it does one's heart good to see, so thoroughly united and happy in and with each other are they all. The children are the greatest, loveliest darlings in creation. . . . Dearest Lady Hopetoun's death has been a fearful blow to me: the loss of so true, devoted, loving and faithful a friend, one to whom I was so deeply attached, is quite irreparable. Your kind sympathy so warmly expressed was very soothing to my sorrowing heart."

Lady Hopetoun had been extremely kind to me in London, and I more than shared the general grief when she passed away. Her young son, Lord Hopetoun, later Marquis of Linlithgow, to whom I shall refer later, when years after as Governor-General of Australia I met him in Melbourne, inherited his mother's charm of manner and many accomplishments; high qualities which received early recognition from the Government in office.

### VII

The winter of 1884-1885 was unusually gay in Florence, and if I remember rightly was the last in which the brilliant Russian colony played a part. This colony represented some of the greatest and most wealthy families of Russia, and

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entertained in the most lavish manner of any in Florence. But, like the absentee landlords in Ireland, to supply their extravagance abroad their peasants and serfs were ground down to the last farthing ; and when this state of affairs was brought to the attention of the late Czar, he issued an order commanding his subjects to return to Russia under pain of heavy penalties ; and with their exodus vanished the social glory of Florence.

The pleasant English society was also most hospitable, whilst the Florentine families confined their expenditure to outside show, driving about the "Cascine" in smart carriages and resplendent toilettes, many returning to their gloomy palaces to partake of a modest dinner of macaroni, varied with *tripa a la Milanese*.

The recognised head of the English colony was Lady Orford, a remarkable old lady who received once a week, from 10 P.M. until 4 A.M., and during that time never ceased smoking strong cigars. She preferred the company of men, and her weekly salon was their great rendezvous. To tell her a good story was to win her esteem, and Florence, with its gay society on pleasure bent, supplied a number of amusing scandals. But public opinion was very lenient. In Lady Orford's own drawing-room, for instance, I have seen a charming lady sit down to whist with her husband, her divorced husband, and her lover, all three men the best of friends ; and this happy condition of affairs being rather envied than censured by the other ladies ; it would have been thought extremely bad form not to invite the whole family party to social gatherings. In fact,

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*le ménage à trois* was considered an eminently respectable and most desirable institution.

The Queen of Servia, whose beauty and striking simplicity of toilette charmed every one, shed an additional lustre on the reunions of that winter. Arrayed in a plain gown, invariably of white or of black, with a single row of pearls around her neck, her abundant black hair fell down her back in girlish fashion, and as she never wore a hat, an admiring crowd soon collected around her when she went shopping or walking, lost in wonderment at the luxuriance of her tresses, her grace of carriage, and her loveliness of feature. Keenly susceptible to such personal attractions, the Florentines were equally impressed by the Queen's simplicity of attire and gentle expression, and called her "the Madonna," a happy conception, as H.M. somewhat resembled Raphael's picture in the Dresden Gallery.

Her union with King Milan had been unfortunate, and it was rumoured that she had left him. If Queen Natalie could then, with prophetic eye, have gazed into the future, she would have known that the tragedy of her life was yet to come—her husband deposed and an exile; her young son, after a brief reign, together with his Queen, brutally murdered at Belgrade by the Palace Guards.

Mr. Livingstone, who had for many years driven his coach and sixteen horses every afternoon through the streets of Florence on his way to the Cascini (not infrequently upsetting at sharp corners or being pulled out of his seat by the strain of the plunging horses on the heavy reins), was seen for the last time during this season.

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Although of late securely strapped to his seat, through age and failing strength, he had ceased to have his usual control over the animals, and one day they bolted with him to his own and the public danger. The Syndic in consequence forbade his team to exceed four, in Mr. Livingstone's eyes a number so insignificant as not to be worth driving, and in high dudgeon, therefore, he left Florence.

On my return to Florence from Cannes, where I had been to pay my promised visit to the Grand Duke, I was the bearer of a letter and present from the Grand Duchess Anastasie to her aunt, the Queen of Wurtemberg, who had arrived in the City of Flowers during my absence. When I called to fulfil my mission the Queen was ill, so I left the packet and letter with the lady-in-waiting, and dismissed the matter from my mind.

Some weeks later two ladies came to the studio to inspect my work. One of them I knew; the other, more elderly, was a stranger to me. If any name was mentioned I did not catch it, yet there was something in her face which seemed familiar. In the course of conversation this lady exhibited an inquisitiveness which did not please me; her inquiries about the Grand Duchess Anastasie and the Queen of Wurtemberg being, I thought, singularly lacking in good taste, and only worthy of a professional journalist. I answered reluctantly, and only so far as politeness required; the volley of questions however continuing, I lost patience at the indiscretion of my interlocutor, and, as courteously as I could, suggested that it would be best for her to apply to

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the Queen herself for the information she seemed so anxious to get. It is not impossible that I expressed this wish with a certain warmth, as the visit was becoming tiresome, and I was anxious to return to my work. To my surprise, however, the unknown lady settled herself more comfortably in her chair, and clasping her friend's hand in a kind of ecstasy laughed immoderately. My look of pained reproach seemed to add to her merriment and that of her friend, until at last, exhausted by laughing, the strange lady said—

“I am the Queen of Wurtemberg!”

Sure enough it was her Majesty, and I now saw that she bore a certain resemblance to her niece, the Grand Duchess Anastasie. The surprise visit was arranged by the Queen partly for amusement and partly to test my discretion; and its success delighted her.

I had the honour of meeting her Majesty again a few nights later, when Princess Woronzoff invited Count de Talleyrand and myself to meet the Queen at dinner.

Outside of the Imperial circle Princess Woronzoff was perhaps the greatest lady in Russia, and I remarked that evening that she received the Queen on terms of perfect equality. Both ladies were about the same age, between sixty and seventy. When the Queen was announced the Princess, followed by Count de Talleyrand and myself, went to the door to receive her Majesty. The Princess embraced the Queen most affectionately, and after the exchange of a few words of welcome and pleasure, during which we paid our respects, led her Majesty by the hand to the salon, where shortly after dinner was announced.

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During its progress her Majesty related with much humour and gusto all about the episode in the studio, dwelling on my indignant attitude with particular delight.

After dinner the Queen expressed a wish to see the collection of precious stones belonging to our hostess, a collection said to be unique in the world, and worth a million sterling. The jewel case was accordingly sent for. Two servants brought in a large cabinet about 3 feet square; this the house steward unlocked, letting down the whole front, when it was seen to contain numerous shelves of rosewood. The steward took out the first shelf and placed it before her Majesty. This was filled to overflowing with superb rubies lying on green velvet. Whilst every one present gasped in amazement and admiration, he placed on the table beside it a second shelf. This was covered with large diamonds all of the purest water. The third shelf was crowded with pearls of perfect form, the fourth with emeralds, and I really forget what the others contained. Dreams of avarice never conceived such a vision of matchless gems as we were then contemplating, now and again the Princess drawing our attention to some unique specimen worth a fabulous sum.

The Princess herself always wore pearls; and what pearls! Every day she appeared with the same twelve rows, perfectly matched, perfect in colour, the last row reaching to her knees. In a portrait I painted of the Princess I introduced those pearls, which alone represented a large fortune.

The Countess de Talleyrand had also a valu-

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able collection of jewellery and gems, a large selection of which she loved to display when she went to a great ball or reception. On such nights a detective sat beside her coachman on the box to ward off the possible attentions of an enterprising thief. The Italian police are not immaculate, and I often wondered that this gentleman did not rob the Countess himself, as sometimes the complement of jewels she sparkled with was worth nearly 1,000,000 francs, enough to assure him a comfortable and pleasant old age.

The Count de Talleyrand had been French Ambassador in St. Petersburg when he met and married the Countess—a lady of great wealth, and of Jewish extraction. Since his retirement from the diplomatic service he had lived in Florence, where his brother, the Duke de Dino, also resided. The latter, bald as a billiard ball, never wore a wig; but the Count, equally bald, had a large assortment, graduated in length. Every fortnight he changed from the longest to the shortest, announcing with great emphasis that he had just been to have his hair cut. It was then imperative for the polite listener to express admiration at the perfection of the cut; and to request, as a favour, the name of so excellent a hairdresser.

The Duke de Dino aspired to histrionic fame, wrote plays, and generally directed the private theatricals of Florence. He once wrote a play for a charity subscription affair, and in order that the very young people might enjoy the piece, a special afternoon rehearsal was arranged for their benefit, their elders coming to the evening performance. All that was aristocratic in the rising generations of Florence was present when the

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curtain rose ; but as the play proceeded the chaperones present began to gasp, and before the second act was finished they clutched at their protégées and fled. There was no evening performance. The charity committee considered the play too improper even for grown-ups, and for some time afterwards the luckless playwright went into retirement to evade the wrath of outraged parents.

Early in May 1885 I left Florence for London, taking with me my portrait of Princess May of Teck, which the Duchess was anxious I should submit to her royal mother at St. James' Palace. Soon after my arrival I settled in a house and studio in South Kensington, and in due course delivered the picture. Princess Mary shared my wish to have it, later, exhibited in the Academy by royal command, and took much pains in the matter. Writing me from Florence H.R.H. thus refers to it :—

“. . . My sister was written to, and my mother asked through, as the latter is still in a very weak state, to apply for the wished for special admittance to the R.A. This was considered, after talking the matter over and duly considering it, the best plan. Mamma having seen and been immensely taken with the portrait after it was finished, and while it is wise to interest her in your success, it makes a certainty of the royal command being given, as she is not likely to be refused. I hope this will be satisfactory to you. May wrote and put the request on the plea that you wished above everything to insure the portrait being well hung, and this I fancy it secures.”

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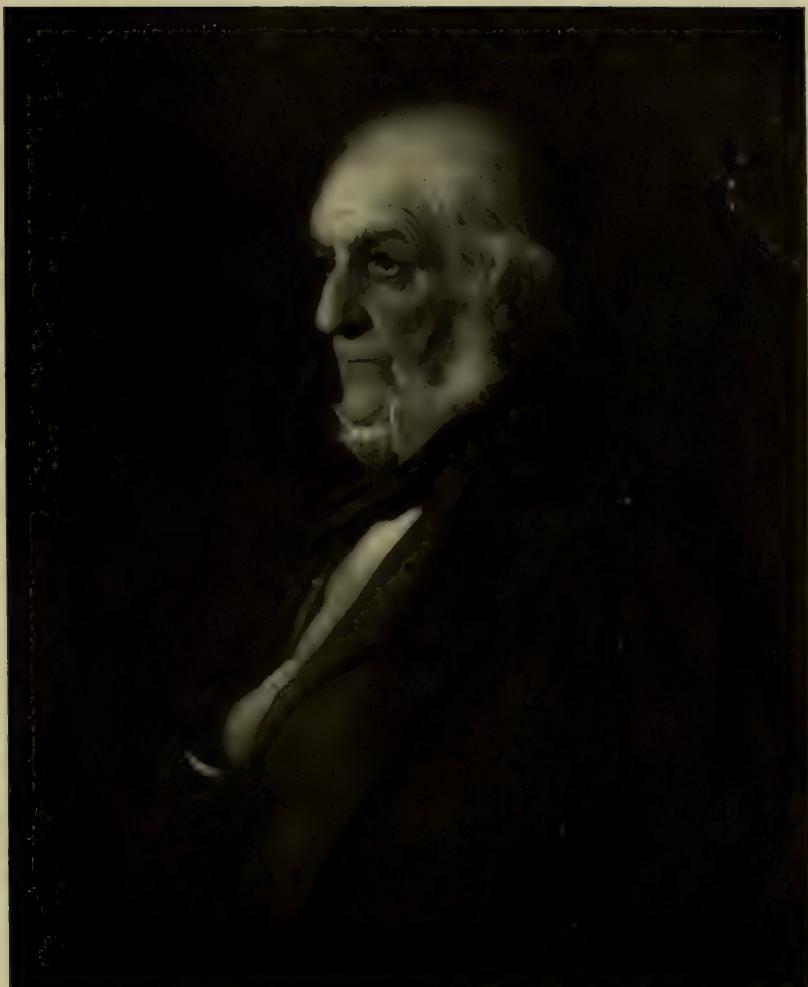
Soon after the receipt of this letter I heard that the Duke and Duchess of Teck had left Florence for good, and were *en route* to London. In August H.R.H. and the Duke had taken up their residence at White Lodge, Richmond Park, and on the 8th of that month I received my first invitation to visit them there.

“ DEAR MR. THADY,—Your visit to-morrow, Sunday afternoon, will be most welcome, and if all is serene and you are in a black coat, who knows but you may be asked to dine. Ever very sincerely yours,

MARY ADELAIDE.

“ H. JONES THADDEUS, Esq.,  
2 Clairville Grove, South Kensington.”

Before concluding with Florence, which after the departure of my august friends never had the same attraction for me, I must mention one portrait I painted in the spring of 1887. Early that year Mr. Gladstone came to Florence, and was the subject of much respectful attention from the authorities and the people, who gratefully remembered his active sympathy with their cause in the days of Garibaldi. When I met him he flattered me exceedingly by a compliment on my portrait of Leo XIII., which he had happened to see in the Grosvenor Gallery. I seized the favourable opportunity to suggest his sitting to me, and in the most charming manner he consented. The Syndic had, some little time previously, presented him with an address of welcome, and he informed me that he was very hard at work rubbing up his Italian with the assistance of a



*Painted 1887*

RT. HONBLE. W. E. GLADSTONE  
*From the picture in the Reform Club*



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professor, in order to write, himself, an answer in that language to the address. He kindly, however, suggested that I could make any studies I liked whilst he was so employed, and promised that, later, when he had got the address off his mind, he would give me the necessary sittings in my studio. I accordingly made the studies I needed to start the canvas, whilst the "grand old man" wrestled with his Italian verbs like a diligent schoolboy.

In due time a sitting was arranged, but, to my dismay, Mr. Gladstone intimated that it was the only one he could give, as he was obliged to curtail his visit and leave the following day.

He came at ten o'clock, accompanied by Mrs. Gladstone, who whispered to me as she entered, "Above all things, my dear, agree with him in everything he says."

I was aware that Mr. Gladstone had an irascible temper, easily aroused by those who differed with him, and gratefully accepted the advice.

Mr. Gladstone consoled me somewhat for the want of further sittings by saying that he would remain that day until two. I had already prepared my canvas with a rough presentment, having decided the pose of the head from my studies; consequently the colour was wet and the proportions more or less correct when I commenced operations. By twelve o'clock the head was practically finished, and the next difficulty was the hands, which could not possibly be painted in the time still at my disposal. I asked Mr. Gladstone to take a natural attitude, one customary to him when addressing the House.

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After thinking a moment he placed his right hand in the breast of his frock-coat, only the wrist being visible; and then, to my supreme joy, put his left hand behind his back, thus solving my difficulty entirely.

Mr. Gladstone had a keen eye for a pretty face, and I really think he forgot the fatigue of standing, in his rapt contemplation of the head of a very beautiful woman which I judiciously hung on the wall in his line of vision, and which he never ceased admiring. Although I painted him several times afterwards, this was perhaps my best presentment of Mr. Gladstone.

In connection with this picture I have a story to tell which illustrates the methods of the Royal Academy. In due course I sent it to the Academy, and it was ignominiously rejected from those sacred precincts.

When the exhibition opened a portrait of Mr. Gladstone by the late Mr. Frank Holl, R.A., was hung in an important position on the walls. This picture was most adversely criticised.

I cast no unworthy reflection on Holl, undoubtedly the greatest English portrait-painter of his time, for it was the imperfect work of a dying man, and unfinished at his death.

I confess I felt deeply the injustice done me by his brother Academicians. The Duchess of Teck shared my indignation, and one day in my presence, H.R.H. spoke to Sir Frederick Leighton (afterwards Lord Leighton), President of the Royal Academy, on the subject; we had happened to call at White Lodge on the same

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day to pay our respects. He, of course, had nothing to do with the hanging committee, but he expressed his regret about what he considered an unfortunate occurrence. He could only conjecture that Holl's friends on the committee did not wish his picture to be prejudiced by a possibly more popular portrait. This may have been the case, but the injustice of such favouritism is obvious, and a young painter such as I was then might have been seriously affected by it.

Soon after this interview the eminent journalist, George Augustus Sala, came to my studio on behalf of the committee of the Reform Club, of which he was a member, desiring to know if I would dispose of my picture. He informed me that the Club had commissioned Mr. Holl to paint the portrait then on exhibition in the Academy, but not approving of the picture the committee refused to accept it. The sum agreed upon with Holl was four hundred guineas, and Mr. Sala wished to know if my picture could be acquired for the same amount.

I demurred at the price offered.

Finally the Reform Club purchased my portrait of Mr. Gladstone for five hundred guineas, and it now hangs in the dining-room of that building.

I confided my treatment by the Academy to Sala, and he in turn expressed his opinion of that eminent body. That opinion was not flattering!

## CANNES

**E**ARLY in the spring of 1885 I left Italy for the South of France, in response to an invitation from the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who with the Grand Duchess was staying at Cannes for the benefit of his health.

He suffered considerably from asthma, and his physicians having recommended a warmer climate than Schwerin, he decided on Cannes, remaining faithful to it as a winter sojourn for the rest of his life.

The Grand Duke's commanding figure and dignified carriage attracted attention wherever he went, whilst his charm of manner captivated the least impressionable natures.

Possessing a highly cultivated mind, and a wide and liberal range of thought, he loved all that was beautiful in literature and art. His heart overflowed with goodness, even to those who slighted and injured him.

An instance occurred during my visit which illustrates the patient, forgiving nature of his disposition.

The French members of society in Cannes were still smarting from the sting of their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, and regarded all Germans with a bitterness of feeling scarcely to be realised to-day.

The Grand Duke was present at a reception

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one evening when a French lady (wife of a distinguished officer who was killed in a battle fought between his division and that commanded by the Grand Duke's father) deliberately insulted and turned her back upon him, creating quite a sensation by the publicity of her action.

The Grand Duke was profoundly distressed, but, though wounded by the injustice of the insult, he would not permit his friends to judge her harshly.

Magnanimously he found excuses for her—she was emotional; had suffered a grievous loss; and connected him with that irreparable sorrow.

He sent her a basket of beautiful flowers, together with a letter of most respectful sympathy. Both were contemptuously returned.

This did not dissuade him from his self-appointed task of securing her goodwill and dissipating her angry feelings. He continued daily to send her flowers. At last his forbearance and delicacy of thought touched her; she acceded to his request; they had an interview, and from that moment became the most devoted friends.

The Grand Duke's noble character made it indeed a privilege to possess his friendship. I recall his friendly influence extended over my early manhood, as he guided my wayward disposition with the affectionate solicitude of an elder brother. Before me now is his large and precious correspondence, every word breathing the generous motives which governed his mind and inspired his actions.

As they are associated with the birth of my eldest son, Frederick Francis, and of my second boy, Victor, I quote two of these letters written

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ten years after the above incident had taken place, during which long period I saw the Grand Duke only at rare intervals. With their note of sadness these charming letters express how little the sentiments of H.R.H. were affected by lapse of time, illness or absence ; how fondly his mind dwelt on the past, that pleasant past, whose memory was so soon, alas ! to be obliterated altogether.

I often compared him in my own mind to Marcus Aurelius, for he possessed all the virtues which distinguished the philosopher emperor. I might carry the parallel further, but suffice it to say that domestic infelicity eventually broke the Grand Duke's tender heart and caused his untimely end.

The following letter is in answer to a tardy one of mine, in which I informed H.R.H. of my marriage and its sequel, a fine lusty boy.

“VILLA WENDEN, CANNES,  
le 25 Janvier 1894.

“MY DEAR HARRY,—Je ne puis pas vous dire, combien je me suis rejouis de la bonne lettre que vous m'avez écrite et combien les nouvelles que vous me donnez sur vous-même m'ont intéressé.

“Ainsi vous êtes marié et père d'un garçon. Je vous en félicite de tout mon cœur et je suis sur que vous êtes le plus heureux homme du Royaume Uni.

“Cela a été très gentil de votre part que vous avez donné mon nom à votre fils, cela me prouve que vous pensez toujours au beau temps passé.

“Je vous prie de présenter mes hommages à

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Mrs. Thaddeus et j'espere qu'un jour j'aurai le plaisir de faire sa connaissance.

“ Je puis vous donner de bonnes nouvelles, grace de Dieu, de nous tous. Les enfans ont enormement grandi surtout Adini [present Crown Princess of Germany] qui sera bientot une grande jeune fille, et Fritzi [present Grand Duke] qui est immense, grand sportsman. Moi-même je vais heureusement bien après la terrible maladie que j'ai fait, il y a deux ans. Je suis beaucoup plus fort qu'avant, je puis entreprendre tous les sports possibles, sailing, shooting, stalking, rowing, &c. Seulement je dois toujours passer les hivers ici, parceque je ne support pas encore le climat du Nord en hiver.

“ Ici tout a changé depuis que vous avez quitté Cannes. ‘Le Réunion’ a fini avec la mort du pauvre Perceval, au lieu de cela le Golf Club, fonde par Micha [Grand Duke Michael of Russia] et sa jolie femme à la Napoule, fleurit, il y a toujours foule de monde. Hier soir nous avons eu un grand bal du Golf Club chez votre ami Tammé, au Montfleuri hotel. Il y a peu D'Anglais ici, beaucoup de Francais et d'Americains. I send you my best wishes.—Yours for ever,

“ FRIEDRICH.”

A year later another visit of the Stork being expected, the Grand Duke writes:—

“ CANNES, le 24 Janvier 1895.

“ MY DEAR HARRY,—Je vous remercie de cœur de votre bonne lettre et des vœux que vous m'exprimez pour la nouvelle année.

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“Permettez-moi, quoique bien tard, de vous souhaiter tout le bonheur possible à vous, Mrs. Thaddeus et a votre enfant, ou plutot a vos enfans parceque je presume que le petit être aura fait son apparition depuis que vous m'avez ecrit.

“Ce serait charmant, si un juor vous veniez avec votre femme à Cannes, pour lui montrer les lieux ou nous avons ete si heureux et si gais ensemble. Mais Cannes est bien changé, helas, plus de réunion, plus de bals, plus de ‘nose.’ [A mutual acquaintance, so nicknamed from the Punch-like organ he possessed.] Je me suis tordu de rire en voyant dans votre lettre le portrait si bien reussi de ce charmant jeune homme. Si il est—a little bit weaker about the knees—c'est probablement le poid de ses millions, dont il a herité.

“Par contre le sport fait de grands progrès a Cannes. Le Golf Club, preside par le Gr. Duc Micha prospere, et les regattes prennent d'annee en annee des proportions plus importantes. Cette année, par exemple, la totalite des prix donnee par le Club, ‘Union des Yachtsmen de Cannes’ et, comme du 1<sup>er</sup> au 9 Mars, s'éléve a 50,000 fr. C'est un joli chiffre. Mon nouveau yacht *Asphodel*, appartenant á Prince H. de Battenberg, et qui a pris le nom d'Aranalla est tres joli et nage bien. J'ai déjà gagné une petite course.

“Nous allons tous bien, grace a Dieu. Les enfans grandissent enormément mais ils ont gardés tout-a-fait leurs figures, comme vous les avez peint dans le temps. Est ce que vous possedez toujours les trois ou quatre petites esquisses a l'huile que vous avez fait de moi

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un matin à M. Carlo 'en costume de modèle'? J'aurais bien voulu les revoir, quoique je ne leur ressemble plus, étant devenu très gros. Je me permets de vous envoyer une photographie de moi faite l'hiver passé, pour que vous me reconnaissiez, quand vous viendrez à Cannes.

"Gardez-moi votre amitié, my dear Harry,  
et croyez moi.—Yours very truly,

"FRIEDRICH."

The Grand Duke "handled the ribbons" to perfection, and loved to drive his four-in-hand. We often went yachting alone (the cloud which eventually darkened his life was then appearing on the horizon), and invariably finished a pleasant day with a game of baccarat, during which there was much friendly badinage and amusement, and but little financial preoccupation at the end.

Too swiftly passed those golden hours! In the heyday of youth, with all its *joie de vivre*, in the society of the many I liked and the few I loved, it is needless to say how happy I was. Now as I write in the sunshine of distant California, glimpsed through groves of orange and olive trees, an azure sea lies before me like the blue Mediterranean, and memory turns to those shores recalling all their dear and precious associations.

We often varied the daily routine by a visit to Monte Carlo, where we lunched or dined at Ciro's, afterwards in the gayest of moods tempting fortune at the tables. I had phenomenal luck at times, once having the honour of breaking the bank; but I was reckless in those days, and

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my winnings invariably returned to their original fold.

Monte Carlo then was very different to the Monte Carlo of to-day. There was only one good hotel—the hotel de Paris ; Ciro's the only restaurant. The visitors represented the best element in European society, or when belonging to the outer world were the most attractive and brilliant of their order.

To-day the place is overcrowded with cheap hotels, and the Casino is filled with an evil-smelling host of tenth rate humanity, who grab your money at the tables, and otherwise misbehave themselves. This age of vulgarity and sordid aspirations upon which we have entered is well illustrated at Monte Carlo, and its contemplation is not pleasing.

During the second spring (1886) I passed at Cannes with the Grand Duke, his sister, the Grand Duchess Wladimir (Marie Paulovna), occupied a villa there with her family.

In charm of manner and culture she resembled her brother, whilst the feminine grace and attractiveness which distinguished her captivated the hearts of those admitted to her intimate circle.

The villa which the Grand Duchess rented belonged to the Prince Radzivill, who married a daughter of M. Blanc of Monte Carlo fame. It was said that before this happy event took place the Prince found himself absolutely penniless at Monte Carlo, having lost the little he possessed in the vain effort to make a fortune at the tables. Hearing of this, M. Blanc had a brilliant idea. He was anxious to provide for the social future

## Cannes

of his daughter, and Providence seemed to have thrown this impecunious member of an ancient family in his way. At an interview with Prince Radzivill, M. Blanc proposed immediate financial assistance, and an enormous dowry with his daughter, on condition that she became Princess Radzivill. The attractive bait was gobbled, and the deal concluded. That the young people did not even know each other by sight was a trifling detail, not considered for a moment. The marriage, which took place in due course, filled M. Blanc with happiness, but it is not recorded that his daughter's life was overburdened with bliss. Such marriages rarely conduce to that result.

The villa—a palatial residence replete with every luxury—was, however, too small to contain all the imperial household, some of whom had taken apartments in the neighbourhood. Exclusive of the ladies and gentlemen in waiting, there was a small army of cooks, servants, and *valets de pied*, all Russians. This formed *le petit ménage* of the Grand Duchess as compared with the enormous household of the palace in St. Petersburg.

The Grand Duchess Elene was a bright-eyed, fascinating child, but rebellious and hot-tempered, causing no little anxiety to her long-suffering English nurse. In the imperial family of Russia there are always English nurses, these being justly considered the best and most reliable. Naturally, therefore, the first language spoken by the imperial children is English, Russian being learnt when they leave the nursery.

One day when the Grand Duchess Elene was posing to me for her portrait, she pouted the

## Recollections of a Court Painter

whole time, evidently nurturing some grievance against the nurse. Whilst peacefully painting I tried to pacify her, when suddenly she seized a large paper-knife from a table near and made a lunge at the nurse, who, retreating before the unexpected onslaught, took refuge behind me. The little lady then transferred her attention to me, her black eyes ablaze with fury. Before I realised her intention, over went the picture and easel, and, quite unprepared for the impetuous charge, I nearly went over myself as well. I caught her up, she still furiously stabbing, took the paper-knife from her chubby little fist, and eventually restored peace. It was, however, a revelation of passion in one so young, and when, in later years, I heard she caused her mother much preoccupation, I was not surprised.

There was a constant interchange of dinner-parties between the Grand Duke and his sister, and I was invariably one of the guests.

The Grand Duchess was an ideal hostess. With a winning smile and most gracious, sympathetic manner she greeted her guests, reserving for each some cordial, pleasant remark, which delighted the recipient. During dinner Her Imperial Highness was the life and soul of the company, the most brilliant contributor to the general conversation. It is only now, after twenty odd years, that I fully realise how entirely delightful were those parties presided over by the Grand Duchess. The same people were invariably present—the two Grand Ducal parties, the few others, like myself, who were admitted into the family intimacy, and the ladies and gentlemen in waiting. A bond of sympathy, family affection,

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and sincere friendship united the company, conducting to a geniality of intercourse and playful retort, which rarely distinguishes such august meetings. Later in the evening there was always a game of roulette for trifling harmless stakes. The Grand Duchess generally held the bank, with her brother as croupier. Her Imperial Highness again reigned supreme, enlivening the game with her wit and merry badinage. I can still hear the pleasant voice of the Grand Duchess, when, after repeating the usual formula, "Messieurs et mesdames, faites vos jeux," she would exclaim to those who hesitated, "Mais n'ayez pas peur, mes brebis, n'ayez pas peur." Again, just before turning the wheel, the lambs would, for the last time, be appealed to, "Mais jouez d'avantage, mes petits moutons, vous allez tous gagner." Such irresistible pleading could not be denied; the stakes were increased, to the imperial banker's satisfaction, and the wheel sent whirling around.

On one occasion Her Imperial Highness related to me the story of the outrage in St. Petersburg, when the attempt to blow up the Czar Alexander II. very nearly succeeded. As she recounted the terrible experiences of that night her emotion at times obliged her to pause and recover her composure.

"I must commence," she said, "by telling you that the Czar attached great importance to punctuality, and all members of the family were expected to assemble for dinner before he made his appearance, which happened, invariably, as the dinner-hour was striking.

"To be late was to incur his displeasure—a thing we all dreaded, none more so than myself.

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“ He generally exchanged a few words with a distinguished guest or some member of the family he wished to favour, and then passed with the Czarina towards the dining-room, to reach which two antechambers had to be traversed. We were therefore usually seated at table between five and ten minutes after his arrival, and, as his punctuality never varied, it was safe to assume that ten minutes after the dinner-hour the first course was being served in the dining-room.

“ The anarchists evidently timed the explosion to occur during this early part of dinner, relying on the strict punctuality of the Czar and allowing about ten minutes’ grace to make sure.

“ On the afternoon of this dreadful day one of my children was taken ill ; I was very much upset and distressed in consequence. When reminded that it was time to dress for dinner I was loth to leave the bedside of the little sufferer, who supplicated me to stay, and I lingered on.

“ At last I was obliged to tear myself away, and before my toilette was quite completed heard with dismay the clock striking the dinner-hour. I finished as rapidly as possible, and hurried to the Czar’s apartment, where I found everybody already assembled.

“ You cannot imagine the feeling of relief I experienced when I remarked that the Czar was not in the room.

“ He had not yet arrived, and such an unusual occurrence was the subject of general comment.

“ It was the first time I had known him to be late, and, most fortunately for me, it was also the only occasion I had been unpunctual myself.

## Cannes

“About ten minutes after the usual time the Czar made his appearance, and it then transpired that he had not noticed the time passing whilst discussing a matter of importance with the French ambassador, who had recently arrived.

“After his usual short conversation, and a few kind words to myself regarding the child, he proceeded with the Czarina towards the dining-room, and we all followed.

“We had reached the second antechamber, and the Czar was approaching the open door of the dining-room, through which the servants could be observed awaiting us, ranged in position behind the chairs.

“At this moment the most awful explosion rent the air; the dining-room vanished from our view, and we were plunged into impenetrable darkness.”

The Grand Duchess was overcome with emotion as she recalled this tragic moment, and it was some little time before she resumed.

“We were stunned and terror-stricken by the shock; some were thrown down, all had their nerves shattered.

“A poisonous gas filled the room, suffocating us, as well as adding to our horror.

“How can I possibly describe the agony of mind we suffered, expecting, as we did, at any moment another explosion beneath us! It is impossible—impossible for me to tell or for you to conceive.

“The impending fear almost made our hearts stop beating as, silent and motionless, we awaited our doom.

“When the echoes of the explosion died away,

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a dead silence succeeded, which, united with the darkness prevailing, so dense as almost to be felt, conduced to render our helpless position still more painful and unendurable.

“We dared not move. There was no escape from the peril which surrounded us.

“Presently out of the darkness came the clear, calm voice of the Czar.

“‘My children, let us pray!’

“The sound of his voice, whilst reassuring us as to his safety so far, relieved the awful strain on our nerves, and brought comfort to our hearts.

“We sank on our knees, sobbing.

“How long we remained so, I really do not know. It seemed an eternity of anguish before the guards appeared with candles, little expecting to find us alive.

“Some of us were nearly demented when the welcome relief arrived, and our feelings were not calmed as we then contemplated the awful nature of the destruction we had escaped.

“A few feet in front of the Czar was a black chasm, where so short a time before had been the brilliantly lit dining-room filled with servants.

“Not a trace of it or of them remained!

“It really seemed as if the hand of Providence had delayed the Czar’s arrival; otherwise we should have shared the same fate. The dim light from the candles intensified the terrifying aspect of the scene before us, and we hastened to leave it for the comparative safety of our own apartments.

“The dread of further explosions haunted us like a hideous nightmare during that long and

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dreary night, whilst the fear of danger to the children nearly distracted me.

“Never, I pray,” concluded the Grand Duchess, “may I have to undergo such agony again!”.

That wish was not fulfilled.

After the Russo-Japanese War, when Russia was overrun by terrorists, the Grand Duke Vladimir became the particular object of their attentions. Both he and the Grand Duchess went through a more prolonged period of suffering, not knowing from day to day, or moment to moment, when the threatened bombs would accomplish their fell work, as they had done with the Czar Alexander II. so shortly after that miraculous escape in the Winter Palace, and later with the Grand Duke Sergius.

## MONTE CARLO—NICE—ALGIERS

**B**ARON DE BENCKENDORFF, to whom I have already alluded in connection with the week spent at Como with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, was attached to the suite of the Grand Duchess Vladimir. With his many gifts and charming manners, he was the *enfant gâté* of the imperial household, and no one delighted more in his company than I did. He left Cannes in the spring to visit his aunt, the Countess de Talleyrand, at Florence, and I accompanied him as far as Monte Carlo. As the train made a stop of twenty minutes, I suggested a last flutter at the tables to Benckendorff. He fell in with the idea, and we hurried up the steps leading to the Casino. There he became engrossed in the game, winning—as frequently happens when the player is in a hurry—and regardless of consequences.

After collecting the gains, which took a little time, we rushed towards the steps leading down to the station, but when we reached the top saw, to our dismay, his train speeding away towards Italy.

It was then nearly half-way to the tunnel which is so plainly visible from the terrace at Monte Carlo, and approaching it at full speed. Benckendorff was furious, and upbraided me most bitterly as being the cause of the predicament he

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found himself in ; for his clothes, money, jewels, and valet were in the fast-disappearing train.

As we stood rooted to the spot, gazing with different emotions in the direction of the tunnel, we suddenly saw a train come out of it. The line was a single one ; we both knew it, and the knowledge of the impending disaster transfixed us with horror.

The trains met, and the locomotives appeared to rise in the air, giving the effect, in the distance, of two long black worms at play. Then they seemed to disengage, and the train from Monte Carlo fell over the embankment into the sea. Spell-bound, we contemplated the awful tragedy, Benckendorff overcome with emotion at the narrowness of his escape.

The collision was the most terrible that had ever occurred in France. It was never known exactly how many people were killed, the railway company declining to divulge the facts. All the passengers, I believe, in the express that left Monte Carlo were killed, and a large number in the train from Italy. The fault lay with the stationmaster of Monte Carlo, who allowed it to leave before the incoming train had arrived. He, poor fellow ! expiated his mistake by committing suicide the same night.

When the news of the disaster spread in the Casino, as it did like lightning, there was a stampede of the gamblers, on foot and in every vehicle to be had, for the scene of the disaster. This movement was not, however, inspired by any feeling of humanity or desire to render assistance ; it was merely a feverish anxiety to get the numbers of the wrecked carriages, in order to return as

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fast as possible and play them at the roulette-tables.

To what depths a gambler's nature can descend was never better illustrated than on this gruesome occasion.

Later that spring the earthquake occurred at Nice.

The most violent shocks were experienced on the Italian Riviera, where they destroyed the town of Santa Maria and most of the inhabitants, a large proportion of whom had taken refuge in the cathedral, thinking that the sanctity of the building would protect them. It collapsed, and not a soul was saved.

The night preceding the earthquake I spent at Monte Carlo, returning to Nice with a number of friends for a supper at the Restaurant Français. In those days the Restaurant Français, situated at the corner of the Place Massena, was second to none in France, and that is saying a great deal. Its cuisine was renowned, and the quality of its wine beyond reproach. The supper was given by a Neapolitan prince as an offering to the shrine of Venus, whose perfumed presence he was leaving for the more sedate and formal atmosphere of matrimonial life. As Peppino we knew him best, and his last homage to the goddess was a masterpiece, exhausting every luxury and resource of the restaurant, every delicacy in and out of season. No Roman emperor could have charmed his guests with a more perfect supper or graced his table with more beautiful women.

Supper commenced about 1 A.M., and, in the most joyous manner, continued until dawn was

## Monte Carlo—Nice—Algiers

approaching, when an ominous sound was heard, and the room commenced to rock. At that period of the festive proceedings it seemed in my eyes a natural thing for it to do, but others more experienced and less fanciful cried, "Earthquake," and there was a rush to get outside. On the Place Massena a terrified crowd was rapidly concentrating from the by-streets; in fact all the good and right-minded people who had gone to bed at a proper and reasonable hour were now, in the wildest of fear and the airiest of costumes, rushing into that open space.

A few had snatched up a shawl or blanket as they fled out of their houses, but the great majority were clothed as when they sprang out of bed. Our party, equally scared, had not far to go to be out of danger of falling houses. In evening dress, however, we seemed out of place in that scantily attired crowd. Other convivial parties had been rudely disturbed like our own, as well as occupants of the apartments attached to the Restaurant Français, who ran out in their night-dresses, screaming with fright. As all their valuables were inside, they clustered in alarm around Emile, the proprietor, who, at a safe distance, kept his eye on the open door.

I know of nothing more awe-inspiring and entirely cowing to the human mind than a *tremblement de terre*. In no other circumstance does man feel, as in the presence of these mighty convulsions of Nature, how truly helpless and lowly an insect he is. The fictions of religion disappear, and the fact is realised that the Inconceivable Power which governs the universe shows no mercy and admits of no favouritism.

## Recollections of a Court Painter

A second shock occurred soon after the first, and the terror-stricken crowd moaned and shrieked in anguish and fear. The rumbling of falling houses could be heard in the distance, but those in the neighbourhood held firm.

A dead silence fell upon the crowded square.

Painfully expectant, the people awaited the next development, afraid even to whisper. In the midst of this profound stillness the notes of a piano were heard from one of the still-lighted rooms of the Restaurant Français, ringing and echoing around the Place Massena. As the astonished multitude turned its eyes towards the window from whence the sounds came, an unmistakably English voice, a good rich baritone, burst into song, and, in stentorian tones, gave us the good old refrain :

“We'll not go home till morning,  
We'll not go home till morning,  
We'll not go home till mor-or-ning,  
Till daylight does appear.”

The confident tone in which the song was sung relieved the pent-up feelings of the nervous throng, and a wild, hysterical outburst of cheering greeted its conclusion. Some returned to their houses, but the larger part remained all night on the Place. The vocalist turned out, as a matter of course, to be a reckless countryman of mine from Waterford, who, declining to leave the supper-table when all his companions had fled, solaced his loneliness by singing the song he loved best. He little knew, or cared, at the time that he brought comfort and relief to countless hearts at the same moment.

## Monte Carlo—Nice—Algiers

The gloom which came over the Riviera after the earthquake was most depressing, so I ran across to Algeria for a short visit, before returning to London. Ramadan had commenced, and the Mohammedan population were experiencing the first distressing and despondent effects of the forty days' fast. I have never tried the experiment of such a long fast myself, but I believe, in the earlier stages, that the effect on the stomach, brain, and temper is deplorable.

Why Mohammed ever instituted this long and trying fast is to me inexplicable. The Arabs in his time were a frugal, hardy race, not addicted to gluttony nor satiated with rich food, those of his wealthy and indolent followers who emulated the excesses of Vitellius belonging to a more recent date.

At present the privation does not bear heavily on the prosperous Mohammedan, who invariably during the fast pass the day in the arms of Morpheus, and feast and revel all night. It is, however, a terrible ordeal for such of the lower classes as have to perform heavy work—unloading ships and coaling steamers, for instance—on empty stomachs.

It was a curious and, in a sense, an impressive sight to contemplate at Algiers the immense crowds of dock labourers and porters, after an arduous day's work, without food or drink, the luxury of even a smoke being denied, congregated on the quays at sunset, waiting patiently for the gun to go off, whose boom conveyed the much-desired permission to eat and drink.

Every man and boy in that silent multitude had an unlighted cigarette in his mouth, and a

## Recollections of a Court Painter

match ready to strike, whilst every eye was turned longingly towards the fort.

The moment the cannon's flash was seen every match was struck, and before its roar reached the ear a cloud of white cigarette-smoke ascended to heaven, like an offering of incense to the shrine of Allah. A great sigh of relief seemed to rise from the hungry city, immediately followed by a tremendous hubbub and shouts of joy.

I had an unpleasant experience during my visit, which my confrères who have visited Mohammedan countries will sympathise with.

On one of my walks I stumbled by accident near a mosque on a secluded burial-place, in which was an unusually picturesque tomb, covered with beautiful white and blue tiles and shaded by fruit-trees, then in blossom.

At its foot was a beggar-man, wisely forgetting the hungry hours in a sound sleep. The picture was complete.

In the happiest frame of mind I set up my easel and settled down to work.

I had finished the sketching part and was painting the beggar, whom I was anxious to perpetuate before he rose from his slumbers, when an old Arab, with long flowing beard and venerable aspect, approached, looked over my shoulder, and, when he caught sight of the figure in the sketch, said something in Arabic in angry tones.

Being absorbed in my work I merely nodded my head, and continued painting. No doubt he was some zealous and fussy old gentleman objecting (as contrary to the religion of Mohammed) to my representing one of the true believers. It

## Monte Carlo—Nice—Algiers

mattered little ; my sketch would soon be finished, and in any case the affair did not concern him especially. Unfortunately, he considered that it did, for he was the Muezzin who called the Faithful to prayer from that mosque, and custodian of the burial-place. His voice rose higher, in a still angrier expostulation, and stragglers, attracted by the noise, appeared on the scene, until quite a crowd collected around us.

The voice of the Muezzin is a remarkable one, resonant and rich in tone, carrying to almost incredible distances. This one addressed the crowd in passionate utterances, his bloodshot eyes glaring at me wildly ; their apathetic countenances rapidly changed in expression as he pointed to the sketch on the easel, and the attitude of the crowd became threatening. At length the Muezzin, who had worked himself into a state of frenzy (the foam from his mouth falling down his beard), suddenly drew a dagger from his belt and made a lunge at the picture.

I caught it up just in time, and he then made a lunge at me. I fell back to the wall behind, drew my revolver, and stood thus at bay for some moments, with my heart in my mouth.

Then a man picked up a stone, threw it, just missing my head. This was the signal for a general onslaught, and I commenced to fire, causing a stampede amongst some of my assailants. Fortunately for me, the shots were heard by some passing gendarmes, who rushed to the scene, arresting both the Muezzin and myself, he still with the dagger in his hand and I with my smoking revolver.

The Muezzin was an important character and

## Recollections of a Court Painter

much respected ; consequently, as we were conducted through the streets, an ever-increasing and angry crowd followed and surrounded us, and although the gendarmes were reinforced as we proceeded, it was with much difficulty and no little danger that we eventually reached police-quarters adjoining the Governor's palace ; whilst the tumult outside increased to such alarming proportions that the troops were called out.

The wildest reports were current that an infidel had desecrated a saint's tomb and tried to murder its honoured custodian ; in short, the blood mounted to the heads of the fasting Algerians, and they were prepared to believe anything.

I was ushered into the presence of the Governor, who wished for an explanation of my part in the grave breach of the peace, which had resulted in this uproar. I told him my story as it had occurred, and how, as a last resource and in self-defence, I had been obliged to draw my revolver. He regretted that I had offended their religious scruples, and sent for the Muezzin, requesting me to be conciliatory to the old man, as his influence alone could now quiet the riotous crowd.

"We only hold the country by the sword," he continued, "and during the feast of Ramadan a trifling incident like the present may cause a general uprising."

The Muezzin entered ; he was now quite calm and composed, and, through an interpreter, at once charged me with representing the figure of a man in the sacred precincts of the tomb—an act repulsive to his religious scruples and contrary to the teaching of the Koran.

## Monte Carlo—Nice—Algiers

I expressed my profound regret at having offended him. I then said that I was familiar with the Koran, and asked which command therein I had transgressed, as I could not recall it. He evaded my question, and when I assured him that Mohammed was a prophet who commanded my respect and admiration, his expression changed. Looking at me with kindly eyes, he said :

“I will give him the kiss of peace.”

We embraced, to the visible relief of the Governor, and after a short conversation parted quite amicably.

The Muezzin then pacified the mob outside, and, as the gun soon boomed, the incident was forgotten, in the enjoyment of the much-desired evening meal.

I called next day to see the Muezzin, and repeated my regrets. With the aid of my Arab boy, who interpreted, we had an unusually pleasant theological discussion, and became such good friends that he, later, permitted me to finish the offending sketch.

## ROME

### I

THE year 1885 was an eventful period in my life, for in the winter I went for the first time to Rome, where I was to have the honour of painting a Pontiff—a privilege no countryman of mine had ever enjoyed, and but one Englishman, Sir Thomas Lawrence.

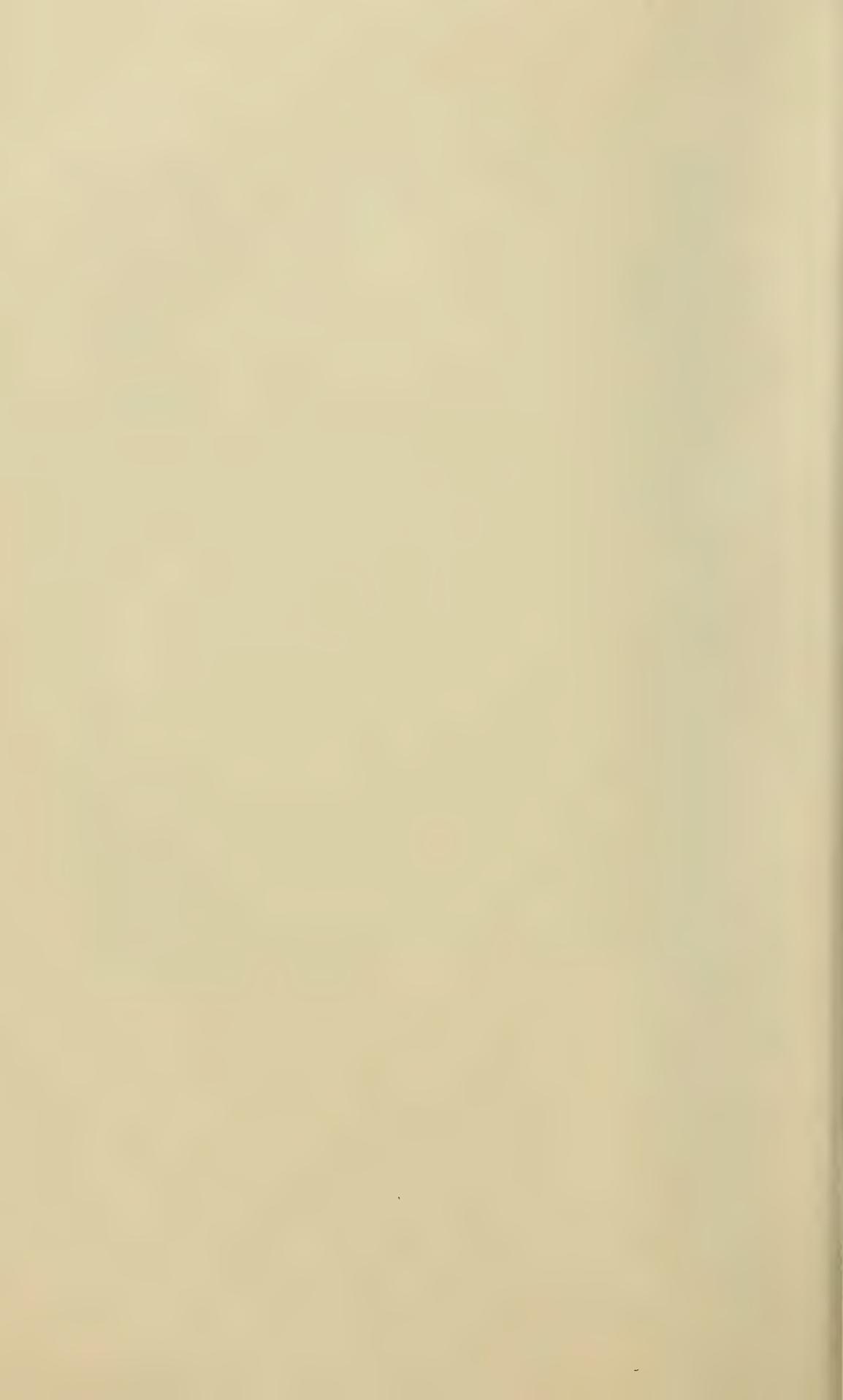
His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. received me with extreme kindness, but could not conceal his surprise that so young a man had been chosen to execute so important a work. He was much interested in the portrait, however, and gave me every assistance in his power, but nervously restless—he never sat for any length of time without incessant changes of attitude. The difficulty of producing under these circumstances a satisfactory likeness of His Holiness may be imagined. Rapidity of draughtsmanship was indispensable, and this I fortunately possessed.

The Pope had a preconceived idea of how he desired his portrait to appear. He squared himself in his seat, uplifted his hand, extending two fingers as in the act of benediction, a conventional smile drawing back his colourless lips. His Holiness sat thus, stiff and motionless, for a moment, then abandoned the attitude as quickly as he had assumed it.



*Painted 1885*

H. H. POPE LEO XIII



## Rome

“Voilà, mon enfant! C'est comme ça qu'on doit me peindre.”

It was, however, exactly how I had determined *not* to represent Leo XIII. In painting this remarkable man one must, as it were, paint the mind and soul, which appeared to shine through the frail, almost diaphanous flesh they had subdued. Intellectual, ascetic, with broad, noble forehead (the thin skin showing a tracery of blue veins), with massive features, eyes set deep and close together, of startling brilliancy, in a countenance pallid and composed as that of a corpse, it was thus Leo XIII. appeared to me a dominant and imposing personality whether, as then, arrayed in simple soltana of white wool and plain calotta (skullcap), or, as I afterwards painted him, in splendid pontifical robes and priceless gems.

Leo XIII. was then seventy-five years of age and at the height of his mental activity. Extraordinarily rapid in all his movements, he spoke incessantly, and so quickly, it was difficult to follow the train of his thought. His range of subjects was extensive and varied. Of Virgil, Dante, and the condition of Ireland he discoursed with knowledge and discernment. He spoke of strange experiences amongst brigands of Benevento, of England, and his nunciature at Brussels. He told me, to my great surprise, that he had only commenced to study French when appointed to Belgium.

“I could speak it as fluently as I do now by the time I reached Brussels. King Leopold used to say, ‘I forgot Pecci is an Italian.’”

His Holiness spoke sometimes in French and sometimes in Italian, according to his humour.

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Apropos of his ignorance of English a story is told, which will bear repetition here. The pronunciation of Latin by an Englishman and an Italian differs as widely as the French of an English schoolboy from that of a Parisian.

On a certain solemn occasion a learned prelate from England, in presenting a deputation to the Pope, read with great unction and good solid British accent a carefully compiled Latin address, in which language His Holiness was an exceptionally polished scholar. After the orator had finished, Leo turned to one of his cardinals, and requested him to convey to the bishop his appreciation of the eloquent discourse he had just heard, of which, however (as unfortunately he did not understand English), a translation must be made for his perusal. The feelings of the learned prelate when that message was conveyed to him have not been recorded.

I had never worked at any portrait with so much interest as I did at this of the venerable Pontiff. When it was completed, His Holiness looked at it for some time, and then, turning to me, said :

“The face I see is that of an old man.”

I murmured that my principal object had been to represent the intellectual qualities, &c., which distinguished him, thus avoiding the delicate question of age.

“Yes,” he replied, “that’s all very well, but you apparently forget *que les Papes n’ont pas d’âge.*”

Leo XIII.’s nourishment at that time was practically babies’ food—milk-sop and weak soup—

## Rome

but it seemed amply sufficient for his frail body. The one stimulant His Holiness required was snuff. He constantly partook of it, a large proportion falling down the front of his soutane, discolouring the white to a dirty brown. Snuff was a tonic necessary to his nervous system.

Once when his attendants forgot the box His Holiness collapsed during some great festival; thus on such occasions it was a common sight to see the cardinals surround the Holy Father at regular intervals, in order that he might take a pinch without being observed.

Leo XIII. reposed no confidence in the honesty or integrity of those surrounding him in the Vatican. Every night he locked himself into his own room, of which he alone possessed the key. The outer doors were then locked by his faithful valet, Pia Centra, who kept guard, and slept near the entrance to the papal apartment. In the morning, when the Pope's bell rang, Centra unlocked the outer door, and, hearing his tap and greeting, "Buon giorno, Santo Padre," the Holy Father would unlock the door of his own bedroom.

His Holiness kept all his valuables in his bedroom. In the light of what occurred at his death, he was well advised in taking every precaution for their safety.

Next in importance to my portrait of His Holiness was that of Father Anderledy, General of the Jesuits, commonly known as the Black Pope, which I painted during the same winter in Rome. There was some matter of dispute between the Pontiff and the General at the time, which necessitated the presence of the latter near

## Recollections of a Court Painter

the Vatican, and he was then living at the Jesuit College, a cheerless, uninviting building. His usual place of residence was at Fiesole, near Florence. I had a letter to him when I arrived in that city, and we had become great friends. As a rule, he came to see me every Saturday in my studio there, and I invariably accompanied him on his walk back to Fiesole.

In the midst of his great preoccupations, director, as he was, of perhaps the most powerful organisation on earth, I really think he found relief from the onerous duties of his position, in the light-hearted conversation with which I favoured him on those occasions.

I can see him now, with his noble thoughtful head bent, as, with folded arms, he stood in a corner of his sparsely furnished room at Fiesole, watching my endeavours to show him the difference between the French *savate* and the English style of boxing. It never occurred to my mind then that he was such a great power (for good or evil); I only knew him as a kindly humble priest for whom I had a great affection, and whose habitual melancholy it was my desire to dissipate.

I took advantage of his visit to Rome to prevail on him to sit for me—a great concession on his part, as his quarrel with the Vatican was, I believe, of a very serious character, and much preoccupied him. Whilst he was sitting for me, I reminded him of my antics at Fiesole, expressing contrition for my thoughtless exuberance.

“Don’t say that, my son,” he answered, “you brought the only sunshine which brightened my life in those days, when my thoughts were heavy with anxiety and sorrow.”

## Rome

This was about the time the Jesuits were expelled from France, and the only approach to passion I ever saw Father Anderledy exhibit was in connection with that event.

On one of our walks to Fiesole I sympathised with him on the subject, when he suddenly stopped, and, with a grim, stern expression on his face, stretched out his hand, and slowly clenched his fist, muttering between his teeth, “Les scélérats, les scélérats!” It was a fortunate thing for the French nation that it was not in a concentrated form between his fingers at that moment, as it would have been crushed to a pulp in the vice-like clutch.

Soon after my portrait of him was completed the General was prostrated by an attack of bronchitis, and I went to see him at the Jesuit College. I found the sufferer in a large cavernous stone-floored room, lighted by one small window in the corner, near which he lay on a hard, narrow couch. The cold was intense. There was no fireplace, and the only attempt at comfort in that chilly dismal chamber was a strip of well-worn carpet by the bedside.

Here was this great personage, wielding a power second to none and commanding unlimited wealth, coughing his heart up in the most squalid surroundings, with no proper attendance and no medical care. I insisted on his seeing a doctor and having a stove placed in the room, amazed that these measures had not already been taken by the fathers. Most reluctantly he acceded to my request, and before many hours had passed I helped to fix the stove, putting the flue through the window, and left him in the care of a good

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doctor, who pulled him through with difficulty, as by this time he was in a bad way.

Whilst I was painting the Pope, Liszt, the great pianist, often came to my studio to watch the progress of the picture, invariably sitting down to the piano and playing divinely whilst I worked. Hungarian by birth, Liszt spoke most beautiful French, possessing the true Parisian accent, so rare amongst foreigners. Even in his old age women adored him, and followed him about as if he were a magnet attracting them. He told me that there is no exaggeration in the story of how in Russia after one of his concerts the ladies present, exuberantly enthusiastic, stormed the stage, battling to embrace him and obtain a memento of the occasion, and that he was in a fainting condition when, eventually, he was rescued by his attendants from the midst of this surging, hysterical mob of women, minus much of his clothing, which had been literally cut off his back for souvenirs. The Polish princess who had been so passionately devoted to Liszt, having her marriage annulled with the hope of marrying him (to avoid which he took orders, and became an abbé), frequently accompanied him to my studio. Constant for forty years in her devotion, she followed him even to the grave, dying shortly after his death.

My studio in Rome was situated in the Palazzo Savorgnan di Brazza, very kindly placed at my disposal by Count Ludovico, a painter member of that ancient family and a friend of mine. His brother, the great African traveller, whose researches were chiefly confined to the Congo, and whose name is perpetuated there in De Brazza

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Ville, arrived from Africa during my stay, and I painted a portrait of him.

His mother was an exceptionally talented old lady, and preserved her rare intellectual gifts unimpaired until her death at the great age of ninety years, which she was then approaching. The Count was one of a large family—fifteen or sixteen children—and, as frequently happens in such cases, the only one of distinction. He was a man of great force of character, and had rendered important services to the country he adopted—France.

He took this step because the French Government warmly supported his enterprise in the Congo, after his own had refused to entertain his proposals. The Romans were very bitter against De Brazza for changing his nationality, but he contemptuously ignored their existence, and during his visit devoted all his time to his mother. So many of the Romans are born tired, it was really a pleasure to meet one who had grit, backbone, and a purpose in life, instead of being, like some of his compeers, a useless parasite.

Possibly the Florentines were born even more tired than the Romans. King Humbert on one occasion paid a visit to that city of flowers, and the patricians came in a body to pay their duty to His Majesty. As each was presented, the King inquired his occupation.

“Niente, Maesta.” (Nothing, Majesty.)

The same answer was returned by every noble until it came to the turn of the Marquis Ginori, who had somewhat lost caste by engaging in the manufacture of the beautiful pottery which bears his name.

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When the King questioned him he answered :

“ I am a potter, Maesta—a maker of majolica.”

“ Thank God ! ” cried the King, “ there is one noble in Florence who does something.”

## II

Cardinal Howard was an important personage in Rome at this time, his hospitality being princely and lavish and his charity boundless. He was the last of the cardinals who kept up a semi-royal state, and his great stature made him an imposing figure wherever he went. His palace was crowded with retainers in rich liveries, and an average of from twenty to thirty guests sat down to dinner with him every day. This meal was served at noon, and shortly after I was presented to him I received my first invitation to dine. The other guests present were mostly clerical, from cardinals in crimson down to friars of the austere orders with bare feet and sandals. The Cardinal, who previous to his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church had been an officer in the Guards, retained the cheery manner and conversational tone of a well-bred soldier, particularly when no other priests were present. On these formal occasions he adopted the more unctuous manner and intonation peculiar to the cloth, unless, as was invariably the case when an English friend was present, he lapsed from time to time, as the excellent dinner advanced, into his natural voice and manners. He had a famous *chef*, and his wines were renowned. There was nothing frugal about his dinners.

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The courses were limitless, and each course was a *chef-d'œuvre*.

No one could be more appreciative of their merits than I was, and as I sat at the Cardinal's side with a healthy appetite, I won his admiration and esteem by doing full justice to his excellent cuisine and wines. As he was getting stout, he was obliged to abstain from some of the good things himself much against his will, and, if it were possible, I think his admiration of my prowess was tinged with envy. After dinner the Cardinal retired to bless some candles, the guests breaking up into groups. I settled down on a divan, chatting, whilst finishing my cigar, with a genial portly prior of the Dominican Order. A sense of peacefulness gradually crept over me, and I awoke some time afterwards with my head pillow'd on the comfortable shoulder of the prior, who was still happily enfolded in the arms of Morpheus.

I saw a great deal of the Cardinal afterwards, and before I left Rome noted with deep sorrow the commencement of the malady which eventually obliged his family to intervene and remove him from Rome. Imbued with feudal ideas of generous hospitality, he was a charming personality and a worthy representative of the great House of Howard. Rome will never see his like again!

A Roman family whose hospitality I prized highly was that of the Marchesa Capranica Del Grillo, better known as the great tragedian Madame Ristori.

She had two children—Donna Bianca, beautiful

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and accomplished, and Giorgio, an artist son, who had his studio near mine.

They were the unique objects of her love and tender devotion, and no mother in the world ever received in return such filial respect and affection as they laid at her feet. Mother and daughter were like loving, inseparable sisters, and Donna Bianca sacrificed her own future, rather than be parted from her adored mother.

The Marchesa was generally attired somewhat after the fashion of Marie Stuart ; the white lace cap of this period became her handsome features wonderfully ; and her carriage and movements retained all the dignity which distinguished her earlier days.

She was held in great esteem by the King and Queen, who invariably visited her on the occasion of her birthday. Once a year, for the benefit of the poor of Rome, she appeared in public, and this performance was the great social event of the season.

The King and Queen, with the Court, were always present, and every rank of society thronged the theatre to pay homage to the great actress.

The ovation she received on those occasions must have touched her heart deeply—both as an artist and as a woman, the admiration for the one being equally mixed with respectful regard for the other.

She once told me that the emotion she felt on these occasions unsettled her completely for some time afterwards ; and, in consequence, later, when in failing health, she was obliged to discontinue the performance.

## Rome

My greatest friend in Rome was Don Marc Antonio Colonna, Duke di Marino, now Prince Colonna and head of that historic family. The Duchess, a daughter of Lady Walsingham's by her first husband, the Duke di Sant'Arpino, was a charming and accomplished woman, a brilliant hostess, and one of the few great Roman ladies who entertained largely. Like the Florentines, the Roman families do very little in the way of entertaining, but are usually at home to their intimate friends after dinner. The Duchess, however, was the exception, and many were the pleasant evenings I spent in the Palazzo Colonna.

The present Palazzo Colonna occupies part of the site of the barracks of the Vigiles, who to the number of seven thousand constituted the police of Imperial Rome. The population of the city was then two million, and the task of the Vigiles cannot have been an easy one when the turbulent unruly element was in the ascendant, as so frequently happened.

The old stronghold of the Colonnas was at the other side of the Church of the Apostoli, with which it communicated by a covered way.

Whilst practically forming part of the present palace and being always associated with the Colonna family, the Church of the Apostoli contains little trace of the Colonnas, who for some reason or other were rarely buried therein. A gallery within the church was exclusively reserved for the Colonna family, the members of which attended mass by a private entrance.

On the first of May, in olden times, a singular festival took place within the sacred edifice.

On that day the gallery was filled by the

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Colonna and their retainers, who threw into the air fat fowls, geese, turkeys, &c., the church resounding with the cries and shouts of the crowd below, struggling and fighting to catch the flying poultry. A young pig was later let down by a rope until it reached a height from the pavement where, squealing and distracted, it was just out of reach of a high jump. There was then great competition amongst the athletic element of the congregation, their efforts to reach the appetising prize creating much amusement and merriment. When eventually it was secured by some nimble youth, the squeaking trophy was borne in triumph away, followed by the lucky captors of fowls, geese, and turkeys, besides many friends, yearning for a taste of the spoils at the evening meal.

The origin of the festival is unknown. It was discontinued in the seventeenth century when the present palace was built. The beautiful gardens which now adorn the Palazzo Colonna are laid out on the ancient archways and substructures which formed the approaches to the Temple of the Sun, and have been (not inaptly) compared to the hanging gardens of Babylon.

The temple itself, renowned for its beauty and splendour, was erected by Aurelian to commemorate his victory over Zenobia of Palmyra.

The interior was richly decorated with pearls and precious stones, whilst fifteen thousand pounds in weight of pure gold was employed in the ornamental setting. Priceless works of Greek art embellished its walls of rare marbles and alabaster, and noble statues graced the niches and spaces between the Corinthian column. No

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wonder the Romans, accustomed as they were to magnificent structures, gazed in wonder at the splendour of the Temple of the Sun.

This site had once been occupied by the "Little Senate," a humorous fancy of the Emperor Elagabalus, intended to throw ridicule on the older institution. The "Little Senate" was presided over by the Emperor's mother, Semiamira, and included in its body most of the ultra-fashionable matrons of the day. From this senate issued the famous Semiamiran Senatorial Decrees, which thrilled the feminine world, and caused the conscript fathers almost to suffocate with rage and mortification.

These decrees determined how matrons might dress, and by whom they should be kissed. They further ordained which ladies should drive in chariots and those who were privileged to be carried in litters decorated with silver or ivory.

One can easily conceive the heat and volatility with which these weighty matters were discussed when the senate was in session, as well as the feelings of some wealthy matron whose desire to wear pearls and precious stones in her shoes was not sanctioned by her rivals in that imperious body.

The superb construction of Aurelian, although partially in ruins, was still in existence in the seventeenth century, when it was destroyed, together with the Mausoleum of Augustus and other ancient monuments near by, in order to supply building material for the Palazzo Colonna, the Quirinal, and other rococo buildings in the neighbourhood. The building craze which took possession of Rome in the seventeenth and early

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part of the eighteenth century is responsible for the wanton destruction of the grandest monuments of ancient Rome.

Even Michael Angelo himself is to be censured for acts of vandalism at an earlier period.

In his time the temples, baths, circuses, and palaces of the Cæsars were more or less intact, but he felt no compunction in wrecking a building in order to remove the porphyry and marble pillars which supported it for the embellishment of his own work, and others followed his example. Nevertheless the damage done was limited, and it was not until the comparatively recent period I mention that ancient Rome was converted into a quarry and destroyed wholesale.

For students of history the Eternal City has a unique attraction. I loved to wander in its highways and byways, striving in imagination to conjure up the magnificent edifices, to reconstruct its buildings (of which that mangled wreckage now excavated formed part) from unsightly foundations, remnants of walls once covered with marble slabs, crude pavements once tessellated. Gazing on those ruins, a feeling of resentment arises against the dark period of papal misgovernment which replaced the enlightened order of imperial times, and this sentiment is enhanced by perusal of those black records of crime and depravity which constitute the history of mediæval Rome.

Apart from workers in gold and silver, the only industries which seemed to flourish there between the tenth and seventeenth centuries were assassination, highway robbery, and usury, whilst the arts of intrigue, lying, and double-dealing

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were brought to the highest point of perfection. Manufactures or trades giving honest employment such as existed during this period in the enlightened cities of Florence, Venice, or Lyons, as well as in the Netherlands, were absolutely unknown ; from the Pontiff down to the myriads of beggars infesting the streets, Rome relied on charity and plunder for its existence. Plunder indeed has been the mainstay of Roman life in pagan as well as in papal times (with only a slight difference in the manner of collection), and even to-day, under better government, it still largely depends on the exploitation of the human conscience for its prosperity.

Society in Rome is divided into two divisions —the “ Blacks ” and the “ Whites ” ; the former representing the party of the Vatican, the latter that of the reigning royal family. The Duke di Marino being a great friend of the late King Humbert, rarely, if ever, went into “ black ” society, whilst his father, the Prince Colonna, enjoying a great hereditary position in the papal court, was one of the shining lights of that party. When, therefore, the Prince died and Don Marc Antonio succeeded to his honours, he found himself in a situation at once delicate and difficult. Unless he desired to break the great historic association of his family with the papacy, he must sever his friendship with the King, and renounce all intercourse with him.

Finally in his dilemma he laid the matter before Humbert, who counselled him to take up his hereditary position at the Vatican ; and after an affecting farewell the two parted, never to meet as open friends again.

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The Prince's welcome at the Vatican, however, was of the coldest description, for the Cardinals would as soon have enfolded a serpent to their bosoms as the new head of the house of Colonna.

When he attended for the first time a great state ceremony at the Vatican he was rudely jostled by the clericals, who obstructed his passage to the daïs, on which he was privileged to stand on the right hand side of the Pontiff.

This interference with his rights aroused the usually placid and peaceful Prince Colonna ; and brushing his obstructors aside, he mounted to the coveted spot.

There, however, the Cardinals already in place resented his intrusion, and tried to push him away, an action which caused the blood of all the Colonnas to purple his brow and flow pugnaciously through his veins.

But for the timely intervention of the Pontiff himself, who alone welcomed his appearance and acknowledged his position, possibly the sword of his ancestors might have flashed before the Cardinals, as so frequently happened in the good old mediæval days.

As it was, the Prince Colonna gained his rights, and, amidst lowering glances, stood defiantly in the place of his forefathers, where in his ruffles and black satin costume he represented well a grand seigneur of the seventeenth century.

## LONDON

### I

**I**N the summer of 1886, whilst my portrait of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. was on exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, I occupied a studio in South Kensington, which was graced soon after my arrival from Algeria by a royal visit. H.R.H. the Princess of Wales (the dowager Queen Alexandra), in company with the Duchess of Teck and some of the young princesses, came to inspect my pictures and take tea with me. The Princess's defect in hearing was, even then, very marked; but it in no way detracted from her remarkable charm of manner or youthful brightness of disposition.

That season in London was a brilliant one; and the young Grand Duke Michael of Russia broke many hearts. He was brother to the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and during his stay in Cannes the previous winter I had known him intimately. His visit to London was with a view to marriage with a member of the Royal family; but whilst on the quest, like a knight-errant of old, many beautiful ladies of high degree tried to captivate his yet wandering fancy.

Avoiding temptation, however, his attention was fixed on a young daughter of the Royal House; and from the Bristol Hotel, where he was staying,

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I, amongst other friends, saw him off, full of hope and gaiety, to Ascot, where he was to know his fate. His suit was rejected; and when he returned, I understood Napoleon's remark:

“Quand vous grattez le Russe, vous trouvez le Tartare.”

There was much excuse for his feeling in the matter, as his addresses had certainly been encouraged, and the invitation to Ascot practically implied consent to the desired engagement. He afterwards wandered far, tasting, like a wild bee, the honey of every flower he met, until the Imperial Court of Russia intervened and arrested his flight.

Mortimer Menpes, the well-known painter and etcher, invited me to a supper-party given in honour of James McNeill Whistler, of whom he was then the most devoted disciple. I was the only Philistine present; all the others, like Menpes, worshipped at the shrine of the “White Lock.”

This white lock in the midst of Whistler's black hair was a kind of “talisman” very carefully preserved by its owner; who, report said, passed hours every morning collecting and arranging all the stray grey hairs on his head, in order to add to its distinction.

Menpes gave us a capital supper; and as the champagne flowed, Whistler, feeling its seductive influence, left for a moment the abode of the Gods, became mortal, and condescended to ask my opinion of Velasquez.

As painters are of one mind regarding Velasquez, my humble opinion coincided with Whistler's, and he accepted the homage as if to himself. The

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evil one, however, tempted me to add that if the master had a weakness, it was perhaps to be found in his horses and dogs ; the former being, I considered, of the wooden rocking-horse variety, and the latter made of the same material.

I had scarcely uttered the words before I realised the wickedness, the almost blasphemy, of any reflection on the great departed one ; above all in the actual presence of his representative on earth !

A thrill ran around the table. The smile of serene beatitude froze on Menpes' face, and Whistler drew his chair away from me as from a thing accursed. Mounting his celestial pedestal, from that lofty height he withered me with a look of profound contempt, and, in cutting tones, demanded :

“ Might I ask you, sir, the name of the animal painter you honour with your approbation, as I wish to treasure it in my memory ? ”

I braced up my courage with another glass of champagne before replying, whilst Whistler fixed his eyeglass more firmly in his eye, preparatory to my annihilation by its rays.

Menpes' emotion was so great, his mind so bewildered by the turn matters had taken, that, when with misty eyes he saw my empty glass, he said resignedly, “ Have another drink, old man,” and passed me the pickles instead of the champagne.

“ I am waiting, sir,” interjected Whistler, “ for an answer.”

“ Don't you think,” I responded deprecatingly, “ that Landseer was a great animal painter ? — better in that respect than — ” I never finished

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the sentence. Whistler arose in his wrath, and addressing the horror-stricken "disciples," exclaimed :

"Gentlemen, you have all heard what this eminent person has said. He has the audacity, the audacity . . . Gentlemen . . . to my face . . . to say . . . that Landseer . . . a cheap tea-tray performer . . . knew how to paint animals!"

He intended saying much more, but just then he gave an undulatory movement in my direction, and I, oblivious of the enormity of the act, drew him gently on to my knee. Somehow or other I had a hazy idea at the time, that, if I had not thus intercepted the downward movement, he might have sat on the floor.

At first he seemed appeased by the pleasant support so unexpectedly afforded. To render his repose there still more comfortable and sure, I placed my arm around his waist, and, in order to soothe his ruffled feelings, passed my fingers caressingly through his raven hair and the priceless lock!

I did so dreamily, my heart overflowing with goodwill to all men, and towards him in particular, with only one desire, to make things pleasant all round.

He tore himself from my embrace as if a viper had stung him, hysterically screaming "Menpes!" "Menpes!" whilst I vaguely wondered at his sudden departure.

It seemed to me an unreasonable and incomprehensible thing for him to do.

Rushing towards the mirror in the room, supported by his alarmed host, he gave one rapid

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look in the glass, and collapsed into the divan at its foot with a groan.

*The White Lock had disappeared!*

My profane fingers had done the fell work, had mixed up the white hairs with the black, and I was now lost beyond redemption.

An awful hush came over the room.

Presently Menpes approached me solemnly, describing Hogarth's line of beauty in his progress, whilst the others clustered around the prostrate form of Whistler, trying to comfort him.

"My God! this is awful," said Menpes hoarsely, as he sank into a chair by my side. "You don't know what you've done! He'll never forgive it—*never!*—and I shall be the scapegoat."

I suggested another drink to my host, to cheer him up, and, as we clinked glasses, volunteered to comb back the scattered hairs to their original place.

This suggestion not being received with the warmth I expected, I felt aggrieved and took my leave.

Menpes was right in his foreboding.

He, an Australian by birth, was shortly afterwards likened by Whistler to a kangaroo, who had purloined his (Whistler's) ideas, hiding them in his capacious pouch, and otherwise maltreated by that capricious genius.

I did not see Whistler again for a long time, and our next meeting was a purely accidental one, at Sir George Lewis's office in Ely Place.

Sir George, most renowned of solicitors, delighted in the society of artists, and was the kindest and best of friends, as well as a benign

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father-confessor to the whole family. He took as much trouble in getting them out of their many scrapes as if they had been the richest of his clients, and he rarely accepted any remuneration for his pains.

Sir George's great position in the legal profession was well assured then, but in the famous Colin-Campbell trial, the most sensational for many years, he added considerably to his laurels by a masterful conduct of the case for the defendant.

During this trial Whistler had been alluded to as a "drawing master," a designation which wounded his *amour propre* deeply. His mission to Sir George on the day we met was with the object of having this error corrected in a public manner.

The dismal waiting-room adjoining Sir George's private office, with its bare table, three or four hard-backed horsehair chairs, well-worn carpet trodden out of all recognition by the feet of innumerable penitent and impenitent sinners, a few forbidding-looking law-books on a dusty shelf, and a law calendar the only ornament on the walls, was enough to give any one the blues.

It seemed a kind of purgatory into which you were ushered, and where you sojourned with unhappy souls until summoned by the recording angel (Mr. Griffiths, the chief clerk) into the awful presence of Sir George himself. I had some trouble of my own at the time, and, preoccupied with my thoughts, entered from the bright sunshine outside into this gloomy room, scarcely noticing a figure in black leaning in a despondent attitude against the mantelpiece.

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I laid my hat on the table, then saw to my surprise that this was Whistler; he at the same moment recognised me and changed his position. I extended my hand exclaiming:

“My dear Whistler, I am so glad to see you!”

At that instant Griffiths appeared, and asked him to come into Sir George’s room.

Whistler slowly collected his hat, gloves, and stick; and, fixing his eyeglass, looked me up and down in a scornful manner; then raising himself to his full height he withered me with this remark:

“*I do not know you, sir!*” and left the room.

I got even with Whistler later at Hampton Court. I had gone one autumn day to visit a friend living there; and later we made a tour of the galleries. As we entered one of the rooms who should come in by the opposite door but Whistler, accompanied by a lady.

As he commenced examining the works, in his short-sighted way, from his end, we started from ours, until, as we gradually approached each other, I could hear his caustic criticisms as he demolished one picture after the other. Apparently absorbed in the painting before us, with my back turned towards him, I awaited Whistler until he came quite close, giving his lecture now for everybody’s benefit, the picture at my side attracting his attention.

“Perhaps you are not familiar with the works of the greatest master of them all,” I then said to my friend in an assumed voice, and apparently continuing a conversation; “the modern Velasquez, Mr. Whistler?”

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The voice behind me stopped suddenly, and I felt its owner sidling nearer to me, my friend observing at the same time that he held up his finger, motioning to his companion to keep silent. Then, knowing my victim's insatiable love for flattery, I simply poured forth adulation! I expatiated on his genius, eulogised his wit, vaunted his endearing qualities of mind and heart, described his unique personal attractions; no mortal, not even Whistler himself, had ever before tasted so divine a draught of praise as I then held to his eager lips. At last, intoxicated by my honied verbosity, he longed to kiss the hem of the garment of this heavenly stranger who so truly valued and so sympathetically understood his rare accomplishments. But, rooted to the spot, his heart beating with joy, and his panting breath warming my back, he never stirred until I stopped for a moment, trying to remember a superlative adjective to crown a supreme conception. Then he moved cautiously around to feast his eyes on the unknown. As he did so I looked down on him, and saw his uplifted face wreathed in smiles, his eyes misty with emotion. For a second he failed to recognise me, but when he did the smile vanished—he shrank back, and gave me a look so charged with concentrated venom and hatred, that it is a miracle I survived its scathing, blighting influence.

Late in the autumn I went to Aske, Lord Zetland's country seat in Yorkshire, where I painted a portrait-group of Lady Zetland and her youngest son.



*Painted 1886*

THE MARCHIONESS OF ZETLAND AND LORD GEORGE DUNDAS



## London

It was the first large composition I had undertaken, and the month passed at Aske whilst painting it forms one of my pleasantest recollections.

Besides being a charming subject for a picture, Lady Zetland was a most patient, sympathetic sitter, and a perfect hostess.

The weather at Aske was very cold, and a log fire was always burning in the great fireplace of the spacious hall. There were the usual delights of a great country-house at that season ; you were burnt alive as you faced the fire, whilst your back was freezing hard at the same time.

Mentioning this reminds me of Rome, where in the old palaces fire-places are unknown, and you are frozen on both sides. I dined there once with an old Prince, whose palace was a mediæval masterpiece. The night was bitterly cold, and in the great lofty dining-room the only attempt at heating was a *scaldino*, or brazier, full of charcoal.

Chattering teeth drew the attention of our host to the fact that his guests, the ladies particularly, were perishing with cold ; he therefore humanely desired us to put on our great-coats and cloaks, and to keep us company donned a great fur coat himself. Thus with collars turned up, and not a trace of evening dress visible, we did full justice to his excellent dinner.

At Aske I first met Tom Garret, the dearest, best fellow in the world. Colonel in the 16th Lancers, he was one of those Englishmen whose golden qualities makes one forget and forgive many of the virtues which distinguish his countrymen. Quiet, reserved, yet always

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pleasant and appreciative, gifted with charming manners and sterling upright character, Tom Garret was a man who shed lustre on the race from which he sprang.

He had a wonderfully sweet and equable temper, and was rarely put out. I once accompanied him shooting, and his keeper handed him a change of gun. He pulled one trigger after the other, then turning, looked at his loader.

That gentleman was purple in the face ; he had forgotten to insert the cartridges.

“ You owl ! ” said Tom in a tone of sad reproach.

“ Why don’t you damn his eyes ? ” I hurriedly suggested.

“ I feel like it , ” he murmured ; and therewith the episode ended.

I painted a portrait of his sister, Mrs. Mitchel, to whom he was devoted, as well as one of the gallant Tom himself in warlike accoutrements ; a travesty on his peaceful nature.

He has now gone to his long rest, regretted by none more than by his artist friend.

## II

It may be my fancy, but there was a charm about London Society in those days which does not now exist. Perhaps this was owing to the fact that the sordid influence of money was less paramount.

Lady Goldsmid’s salon (the last of its kind in London) was the rendezvous of all that was best in music, art, diplomacy and the world in general ; and I rarely missed one of her Fridays.

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She herself was one of my best and kindest friends, and for both her and her charming daughters I had a great and affectionate regard.

There were, I think, ten in all (a remarkable run in girls for one mother to accomplish), bright, delightful children, singularly accomplished, and from the smallest tot familiar with four languages.

Whilst at Summerhill, near Tunbridge Wells, a fine Elizabethan mansion belonging to Sir Julian Goldsmid, I used to spend most of my leisure time in their society when not engaged on Lady Goldsmid's portrait, which I painted during my visit.

I stayed at Summerhill a month or six weeks, and during this time there were the usual weekend parties from London, composed largely of diplomatic and political friends of Sir Julian's, interspersed with some musical celebrities. The whole family enjoyed these weekly invasions immensely, every Saturday bringing a new contingent, with new thoughts and ideas.

Goldsmid, who was the best hearted of men, like most millionaires had some quaint ideas of economy, particularly in the matter of cigars. On one occasion, when there was an unusually large party in the house, the ladies having retired, all the men drifted into the smoking-room. On the table was an oaken box of cigars, but it was locked.

Presently our host appeared, and as he opened the box (he did not smoke himself) asked if any one would like a cigar. There was a general chorus of "Yes, thank you." He looked around, rapidly summed up the men present, counted that

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same number of cigars, and placed them on the table, locking the box again after doing so.

He then said good-night, and went to bed.

One man, however, Sir J. B., who had left the room just before the distribution of cigars, now returned, went directly to the cigar box (the supply served out being in active employment), and finding it locked turned to me.

"You know the ways of the house," he said ; "where are the cigars kept?"

"Too late," I answered ; "the bar is closed."

However, I took mercy upon him, and went to my room for my own box of cigars, with which I gladdened his heart. He was in the diplomatic service, and had recently married a most charming woman, whom I had taken into dinner. We sat chatting together for a long time, most of the others disappearing one by one, until the few remaining joined in our conversation. We exchanged stories until the clock struck 2 A.M., when we decided to break up.

"By-the-bye," Sir J. B. asked, as we shook hands, "do you know where my room is? I have quite forgotten."

This was a nice predicament!

Every soul in the house excepting ourselves were in bed. To add to my confusion another man, Mr. C., a distinguished government official, with a very pretty wife much younger than himself, and of whom he was supposed to be jealous, here remarked :

"I'm afraid that is also my case ; I can't quite remember if mine was the red or the green room."

I often went with Lady Goldsmid through the

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house when she was apportioning the rooms before the guests arrived, and on this occasion I was almost certain she had given the red room to Sir J. B.

We lit our candles, and I accompanied the two men to their respective doors, which they then seemed to remember. I left them noiselessly entering, fearful of disturbing the slumbers of their better halves.

There was little ceremony about breakfast at Summerhill, most of the guests, accustomed to foreign life, taking a light morning repast in their rooms. The general reunion was at lunch; always a bright and cheery meal. On the following day, to the general surprise, neither Sir J. B. nor Mr. C., nor their wives, put in an appearance at lunch. In answer to an inquiry, Lady Goldsmid, who seemed much perturbed, said they had been unexpectedly summoned to London, and further curiosity ceased. Later, she asked me to come to her boudoir, and as soon as the door was closed she turned to me and exclaimed :

“How on earth could you do such a dreadful thing?”

“Dreadful thing!” I said, astonished; “what dreadful thing?”

“You sent those two poor men last night into the wrong rooms,” she said, half tearfully, half laughing.

“I swear I didn’t do it intentionally,” I protested; “I can assure you they seemed to know their own rooms when I left them.”

“Well, wherever the fault lies they made a mistake, and it has been a terrible time for me!

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They left this morning, the husbands enraged against each other, and their wives in tears; I tried to make peace, but it was impossible."

"Why didn't they find out the mistake at once?" I asked.

"They would have done so, of course, but for their desire not to wake their wives at that hour, so they undressed in the dark. Mr. C. was terribly upset when he heard a voice saying:

"'Jack, how very late you are!'

"Perhaps you do not know that his Christian name is Francis. At any rate, shocked to find himself in so embarrassing a position, he picked up his clothes and fled precipitately. The passage outside was quite dark, and failing to find a match in his pocket, he was unable to reach the right room.

"Much the same thing had happened to Sir J. B., and as these two wretched men wandered about the corridors they bumped against each other, and had high words. They were obliged to remain where they were until daylight, and when at last they found their proper rooms were most bitter and unpleasant in their remarks.

"Altogether it has been most disagreeable, and I'm afraid you were the innocent cause of all the trouble. One thing is certain, their wives think you did it on purpose."

Lady Goldsmid passed away, comparatively young, leaving a blank in society and in the hearts of her many friends which has never been filled. Sir Julian did not survive her long. He fell into bad health, and one day meeting him in Piccadilly, I remarked he was not looking well. He then

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told me he was suffering from "poor man's gout," and I could not resist drawing his attention to the irony of the situation.

"Here are you," I exclaimed, "a millionaire, suffering from 'poor man's gout,' whilst I, a pauper, am afflicted with 'rich man's' variety."

"I wish I could change with you," he said.

"So do I in one respect," I replied, laughing. It was, however, no laughing matter for him. The disorder sapped and undermined his strength, and eventually he succumbed to its ravages when little past middle age.

In 1886 I paid a short visit to Bray, near Dublin, where I had the long desired pleasure of meeting Charles Stewart Parnell. It was often said that he possessed a cold and rather forbidding manner, but I did not find this the case. He was most pleasant and cordial, with a certain reserve, which seemed to come as much from shyness as from anything else. His dark eyes are the feature I remember best ; keen and piercing as they were, sometimes wistful, always observant. I was to have painted his portrait, but the O'Shea divorce proceedings intervened and the matter never came off.

I also met Father Healy, without doubt the wittiest man of the century and the best of hosts.

He was a poor parish priest near Bray, but the greatest in the land, from royalty down, were proud to sit at his humble table. If he had given them nothing else, there would have been a feast of reason and wit ; but, as a matter of fact, his dinners though plain were excellent, whilst nothing could be better than his wines. That he managed

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this upon his slender income was entirely due to his parishioners, who cheerfully supplied the necessaries when he had distinguished guests to dinner. They were very proud of their "padre," and the butcher, the wine merchant, and poult erer, never failed him on these occasions. Father Healy's only servant was an old woman, who, to my knowledge, could cook a ham or turkey better than any *chef* at the Carlton. Whilst serving the dinner she varied the pleasure of the meal by heated arguments with our host whenever (as frequently happened) he passed any reflection on her skill. I complimented him on his excellent champagne. "I am glad you like it," he said; "as a matter of fact I wasn't quite sure of its quality myself. My wine merchant, however, will be glad to hear your commendation. There he is," and he pointed at Lord Powerscourt by my side.

It appeared that once Lord Powerscourt, coveting a picture Father Healy possessed, endeavoured to buy it; but the priest would receive no money.

"Give me in exchange," he said, "as much of the best champagne in your cellar as your conscience dictates, and I am satisfied."

This was the wine we were then drinking.

I lunched with Lord Powerscourt next day, and went over his beautiful place, concluding with a visit to the well-known falls on his estate. A good story is told of Lord Powerscourt, "si non e vero e ben trovato." In his spacious hall is a very fine collection of sculpture; a beautiful nude statue of Venus occupying a prominent place.

One day Lord Powerscourt was showing some

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of his tenants the art treasures, and when they arrived before Venus, he noticed the shock it gave to their modesty, and maliciously inquired what they thought of it. They hummed and hawed, and showed no desire to give an opinion. However he pressed the question ; and at last an old man blurted out :

“ Sure, yer honour, we don’t know what to say ; none of us ever saw her ladyship like that ; but if yer honour says it is a foine work, it must be like her.”

They had concluded that it was a representation of Lady Powerscourt.

Later in Homburg I saw much of Lord Powerscourt, who, like myself, sought its waters to alleviate the twinges of gout. He was one of the few members of his class in Ireland who took an intelligent interest in art, and in association with the different societies in Dublin had done much for its advancement. His forbears of the eighteenth century represented well the cultivated *connaisseurs* of the period, the art treasures and unique gardens at Powerscourt being a lasting tribute to their refined taste. His son,<sup>1</sup> a pleasant cheery young guardsman, whose portrait I painted at Homburg, was built on the same big stalwart lines as the author of his being.

“ Let me see his foot and I will tell you if he is his father’s son,” said a ribald friend of mine from Wicklow when I dwelt on the resemblance.

He was referring to the legend that the largest boot made was too small for Lord Powerscourt’s requirements, and in this respect I was glad to be

<sup>1</sup> The present Viscount Powerscourt.

## Recollections of a Court Painter

in a position to dispel any doubt he might have entertained.

Soon after my return from Bray I met Robert Browning at the house of a wealthy Russian, domiciled in London. Our host was a quaint little person, whose one object in life was to assemble notable people at luncheon parties, and of whom it was said "he hoped to establish a literary salon, but only succeeded in opening a restaurant."

I was disappointed in the appearance of the poet philosopher.

He looked like a portly shopkeeper of the ultra-respectable type, and during lunch his whole attention was centred on the good things before him, all of which he sampled liberally. There was no feast of reason afterwards; the revered author of "The Ring and the Book" got into a comfortable arm-chair, closed his eyes, and communed inwardly with his soul.

As the painters and plumbers were in my own rooms, a friend familiar with their ways invited me to stay in his house until they thought fit to vacate the premises. Percy —— was a strict disciplinarian, and ought to have inhabited a monastery, so much did he prize the sanctity of his bachelor abode.

He was most severe about what he considered the levity of my conduct, and on several occasions I was much embarrassed by his unexpected return home, when invariably he danced a war dance, and spoilt the harmony of a pleasant evening.

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On our return one night about 1 A.M. from a party, Percy's housekeeper met us at the door, a thing she had never done before.

Percy's active brain immediately conceived burglars and all kinds of horrors, and he eagerly asked what was the matter.

"There is a lady upstairs," timidly answered the housekeeper.

Percy instantly turned upon me without waiting for any defence, and blasting me with a look of rage, conveyed to my bewildered senses that the long-suffering worm (his own self) had turned at last.

He then rushed into the house, threatening vengeance on the unknown lady, and dire destruction to myself.

I followed him, wondering which of my friends it could possibly be, and lamenting her imprudence.

Percy, beside himself, burst into the drawing-room, where there was a tall lady standing, closely veiled.

"Madam, I must request you to leave this house at once!" he cried; "I am surprised at your conduct, it is scandalous!" The lady gave a start and shrank back at this unlooked for onslaught, whilst I racked my brains, trying to identify her.

"Father! I am your daughter," she at last murmured, lifting her veil.

Percy collapsed into a chair, whilst I discreetly retired, with a deep sigh of relief, and a delicious sense of injured innocence.

I recalled hazily that Percy had been married in Paris to a Russian lady in the palmy days of

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the French Empire ; but he rarely spoke of his marriage (not a happy one), and never mentioned that he had a child. As a matter of fact he had not seen his daughter since she was a baby, as she resided with her mother in Russia ; and I really think he had forgotten her existence, until without any previous notice she made this dramatic appearance.

Her advent in England was caused by her mother's death, and a desire to behold the author of her being ; but poor Percy was not intended by nature for the rôle of father, and in a very humble spirit he came to me later for advice. In the meantime I had moved, and his daughter occupied my room.

I pointed out the new delights in store for him as a chaperon, the joy he would bring to the dowagers ranged around the ballrooms, and many other attractions of his new status ; but instead of cheering him I only seemed to add to his despondency. The new situation meant a revolution in his life, and he dreaded the change.

To begin with, he had been forty-five for so many years, that any alteration to fit in with the new situation was not alone distasteful to his conservative mind, but positively immoral.

It was therefore a terrible wrench to his feelings when an old and fond friend kindly solved the problem for him, at a dinner-party, and he had to jump up to fifty-seven with a smile, a smile that consigned his friend to everlasting perdition.

After serving a chequered apprenticeship, however, he ultimately became a devoted father to a most charming daughter.

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He only once touched on his marriage with me, and that was in connection with an episode at Dresden when he was *charge d'affaires* there. He had been separated some time from Mrs. — when, one day, he learned that she had arrived in Dresden with the intention of persuading him to return to his marital duties. Scared to death at this prospect, he sought a means of escape.

As his chief was absent he could not leave his post. He therefore decided to dye his red hair and beard black, in case of an accidental rencontre, and the personnel of the chancellory were sworn to say that he had been sent on a special mission to Timbuktu, or anywhere else they fancied.

He did meet his wife once in the street, but she passed on, not recognising the black-bearded man who dashed so wildly away. This was a terrible time for poor Percy, but worse was to come when Mrs. — left for Russia.

Returning to their normal colour, his hair and beard first assumed a beautiful purple hue, then changed by various interesting and gradual transformations into a bright green; then, in turn, to every tint of the rainbow, before settling down to ruddiness again.

Whilst this metamorphosis was taking place his chief came back, and, in answer to fervent entreaties for leave of absence, said for nothing in the world would he miss such an interesting study in colour as Percy was then affording.

Percy's colleagues in diplomacy had never before evinced such affection for him. They loaded him with compliments, and brought in-

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numerable friends who were anxious to make his acquaintance.

The changes of colour were the subject of their daily solicitude and sympathetic admiration ; and it was a source of universal regret when his hirsute adornments assumed their natural hue.

Percy likened his feelings during this period to those doubtless experienced by departed ones who sojourn in the place paved with good intentions !

### III

Jan van Beers held an exhibition of his pictures in Bond Street in 1887. The marvellous finish of his painting had given rise some time previously to a libellous statement that he painted on prepared photographs ; he promptly took action, and from a prolonged lawsuit which attracted universal attention, emerged triumphant.

He celebrated this event by a supper in the picture-gallery, which was probably the most remarkable ever given in London. There were about a hundred more or less shining lights present representing politics, diplomacy, "la haute finance," art, music, literature and the drama.

Van Beers himself, with his clean-cut refined features and gentle suave manner, was a charming personality ; his voice soft and low, most agreeable to the ear. As an artist his reputation was then at its highest, and his work the talk of the art world.

Words really fail me to describe the banquet he gave, full as it was of delightful surprises

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and beautiful effects in electric lighting. Electricity was little understood in those days, and the masses of luminous colour conceived by Van Beers—fruit, flowers, &c. decorating opalescent tables (the tops were of plate glass with lights beneath)—amazed and charmed his guests. If I remember rightly Marion Spielman was my neighbour at table. He had already established his reputation as perhaps the brightest and most accomplished art critic in London. Youthful and frail in appearance, his pallid countenance was illuminated by the most remarkable eyes, black and lustrous, that I have ever seen. They literally danced with life, alertness and intelligence, riveting your attention with a mesmeric attraction.

On the table before Van Beers was an enormous pie, richly decorated; not unlike an imposing wedding cake. Having attracted general attention to his action our host rose from his seat with a gigantic knife in his hand; and, after some preliminary flourishes, proceeded to cut the pie. A dead silence prevailed—every eye was watching his movements. Then having apparently cut the pie to his satisfaction, he lifted the severed portion, and, lo and behold! a multitude of singing birds flew out, madly chirping. The room seemed alive with them. They fluttered backwards and forwards, filling the air with their cries, sometimes alighting on the flowers, distracted, frightened out of their senses.

When the excitement caused by their advent had somewhat subsided, we were suddenly spell-bound by hearing a divine voice singing an aria from "Faust."

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Such a superb organ could only belong to one *diva*, the idol of London, and when the song finished a shout of "Melba" rent the air, whilst the applause was deafening. By a common impulse every face had turned in the direction of the sound, but there was nothing to be seen—nothing but a wall covered with pictures. Everybody was mystified; was it Melba, or her spirit, conjured up by our magician host? He, however, smiling at our bewilderment, declined to give any explanation; and shortly afterwards the party broke up, enchanted with the evening.

Some time later Van Beers told me how he had arranged the matter. As Melba was a friend and great admirer of his work, he went to see her, and laid his plan of the supper before her, under a vow of secrecy. She consented to sing one song, but when informed that she was not to be seen, and would have to sing through a hole in the wall, promptly changed her mind, and declined.

After a good deal of coaxing, the promise of a picture, and representations of the sensation her singing under those circumstances would make, she at last agreed; and Van Beers departed a happy man. By the side of the gallery in which his pictures were exhibited there ran a mews, terminating in a stable and coach-house, which adjoined the end wall of the gallery. He caused an opening to be made in this wall, near the ceiling, then had it covered with linen, stained to harmonize with the neighbouring colour, so that from the floor nothing was noticeable.

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Melba, then in the glory of her beauty and fame, drove straight from her triumphs at the opera-house to the stables ; mounted a rickety ladder to the loft, and there supperless, surrounded by hay and stable perfume, she awaited her signal to burst into song.

I question if any other man could have accomplished the feat of inducing a great artist like Melba to sing under such conditions.

Van Beers later built himself a house in Paris, which in its quaintness resembled some hobgoblin palace. His bedroom was modelled after a Hindoo temple ; the walls of carved wood richly gilt and coloured, represented the Incarnation of Krishnu, the bed itself being composed of enormous carved serpents intertwined, their tails forming the legs, their heads with jaws distended and flashing crystal eyes, the ornaments at top and bottom. If some of my friends after a festive evening were put into that bed in the happiest frame of mind, I can imagine what their feelings would be in the morning, when their awakening glances first encountered the glassy eyes of the snakes, and their trembling fingers touched the reptilian bodies.

Disliking the presence of servants, his dining-room was so arranged that the large alabaster table descended through the floor to the lower regions, reappearing in due time with each course.

Here (for the spirit of a Lucullus animated him) Van Beers gave many a supper party worthy of the famous Roman.

On one occasion his guests, as they sat down to table, were charmed by a number of pictures ;

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life-size heads of beautiful women hung in rather a dim light around the room. The life-like quality of the work excited their enthusiasm, and they warmly congratulated the artist.

As the table successively disappeared and reappeared with new delicacies and renewed surprises, the gaiety increased. The climax of enjoyment, however, was reached when the *pièce de résistance* appeared in the form of a silver casket, richly chased, with a highly ornamental cover in place.

The dimensions of the casket were colossal. It half covered the table, as it rested on a bed of crimson roses, whose perfume filled the room. What mystery did it contain? What new and thrilling sensation lay hidden in those capacious depths? Van Beers, with the entirely happy smile of a gratified host, exulted in the feverish impatience of the *convives* for a moment, then moved by their entreaties he lifted the cover.

A miracle of miracles! Venus, in all her beauty and purity of divine form—Venus, in her most bewitching and enchanting mood—Venus, the cherished of all mankind, arose from cotton-wool foam and sitting on the side of the casket deigned to give one of her pink-tipped feet to be kissed, whilst the other rested on the sweet-scented roses.

At the same moment a merry laugh burst from the pictures on the wall behind, startling the already over-excited nerves of the guests.

As they turned in surprise, the faces vanished from the frames.

A cluster of charming nymphs, attendants on the Goddess, came dancing into the room and,

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with all due ceremonies, paid worship to their divinity ; now holding the sacred symbols in her hands, a peach and a glass of champagne !

In 1887, or 1888, I moved from South Kensington to Maddox Street, Hanover Square, a more central and convenient position for my many sitters. Shortly after, Marion Spielman called to see me regarding a portrait of Mr. W. T. Stead, which his former colleagues of the *Pall Mall Gazette* desired to present to that distinguished journalist. Stead had been editor of the paper, and during his reign had instituted a campaign against vice, then, as now, a distinguishing feature of London life. In his zeal he overstepped legal bounds, suffering imprisonment in consequence. On his release he relinquished his post on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and started the *Review of Reviews*.

It was then that his old comrades, wishing to express their esteem and affection for their former chief, commissioned me to paint his portrait. Stead was the most tender-hearted of men ; but the most blood-curdling in his denunciations of the prevailing weakness of mankind. To touch on that subject in a palliatory tone was to raise a tornado highly charged with electricity ; his light grey eyes like burnished silver sparkled with an unearthly light whilst he stormed around, clutching at anything and everything, including his own hair. Whilst he was sitting for me we had many such discussions, and I sometimes feared he would explode and go up like a rocket to heaven, but this divergence of views did not prevent our becoming the best of friends.

## Recollections of a Court Painter

George Augustus Sala, myself, and a number of other friends accompanied Lord Ronald Gower to Stratford-on-Avon for the unveiling of the latter's Shakespeare Group, which he had presented to that city.

Ronald Gower was an old friend of my student days in Paris, and it was a pity he was born a duke's son, blessed with ample means. Under other circumstances he would undoubtedly have occupied, as a sculptor, the high position he was eminently qualified to fill. Endowed with every artistic gift and taste, inheriting the type of his mother the great Duchess of Sutherland, the most beautiful and accomplished woman of her day, Lord Ronald Gower was one of the most interesting personalities of the Victorian period.

The unveiling of the Group, a remarkably fine piece of work, was accompanied by much speechifying, eating and drinking; the Mayor, Sir Arthur Hodgson (whom I later painted), and the local people treating us royally for the few days we remained.

On my return to London from Stratford-on-Avon I found a letter from a working-men's association in Cork, my native city, asking me if I would undertake to paint a portrait of Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., then the object of their great admiration. They were all poor men; the sum they had subscribed and offered me, although great in proportion to their means, was trifling, compared to my usual terms. I appreciated their position, and, above all, the manner in which they had approached me on the subject, and I gladly agreed to paint the picture. I communicated with Mr. O'Brien, but that gentleman did not deign to

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respond. In the meantime, the association in Cork had voluntarily sent me the cheque for the picture in advance, and it rested with me to deliver the portrait. I again wrote to Mr. O'Brien, and this time he had the grace to answer and make an appointment to sit.

It was the first time I had seen him, and he was not a captivating subject to paint. He evidently suffered from dyspepsia, having a sallow complexion, his nose slightly hooked and pointed, being a warm carnation in colour. However, I did my best with such slender material, and was glad when the sitting (during which he never expressed the slightest appreciation of the compliment paid him by his admirers) came to an end. This was my first and only sitting from him. Afterwards he broke all his appointments, and I dropped the matter in disgust.

When I next took it up, a year afterward, it was in response to an appeal from the association, begging me to finish the picture anyhow, as they wished to deliver it. During this period a great change had taken place in their feelings towards Mr. O'Brien. The Parnell case had come on; the first to turn on the great leader being O'Brien, whilst the association remained faithful. Consequently the formerly adored one was thrown down from his pedestal and execrated. Knowing that Mr. O'Brien would have to live with the picture, I had no compunction in finishing the portrait from memory, its only merit and striking characteristic being the rich carnation of his most prominent feature. I delivered it in due course with an explanatory letter.

The portrait was exhibited in a shop window

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in Cork, then in the throes of a bitter election contest, in which Mr. O'Brien took a prominent part, and the mob nearly wrecked the premises in order to destroy his effigy. The association got alarmed, and, not wishing to altogether waste their money, they put the portrait on a truck and wheeled it to the hotel where Mr. O'Brien was staying; entered in a body and threw the picture at him. The same night they went on the war-path for his scalp, and he narrowly escaped with his life.

His own account of the occurrence I quote from *The Catholic Press* of Sydney, Australia, in an interview ten years later. It illustrates the healing power of time, and shows what a pleasant companion my picture was.

"When William and Mrs. O'Brien were in Sydney a friend asked the patriot for a photograph, and he replied, laughing, 'There is a picture at home my wife would like to give you, but which I would not part with for many thousands. It is really an excellent portrait, and was painted by our friend Thaddeus. My wife does not like it, but I value it, not so much for the painting as for its associations. Let me tell you. At the time of the Parnell split I was President of the Cork Land League, but I found myself on one side, and all the members of the League on the other. The Parliamentary election that followed was the most exciting in my experience, but one night a truce was declared for an hour, while my old followers, who had become my political opponents, came to my hotel and presented me with that portrait with expressions of deep esteem. It was one

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of the most dramatic moments in my life; an incident which would be impossible outside Ireland. The presentation over, the battle was resumed in all its fury."

Mr. Thomas Sexton had retired from Parliament some time before the Parnell split, and had become Lord Mayor of Dublin. During his period of office he effected many important and advantageous changes in the financial obligations of that city; consequently the corporate body voted a sum of money for the painting of a full-length portrait in recognition of his valuable services, and they favoured me with the commission.

Besides being a good speaker and possessing a profound knowledge of politics and political life, Mr. Sexton had a veritable genius for finance.

Mr. Gladstone once regretted to me that Sexton was not an Englishman, as, in that case, he would have been one of the ablest Chancellors of the Exchequer that England ever possessed.

He was most sympathetic in manner and a perfect sitter. Endowed with regular features and a noble intellectual brow, he was furthermore an excellent subject for a picture.

The delivery, when finished, of this portrait to the Dublin Corporation was attended with similar difficulties to those attending the presentation to Mr. William O'Brien in Cork. The majority of the corporate body remained faithful to Parnell, whilst a small minority, which included Sexton, had deserted the chief. This action on Sexton's part created much bitterness of feeling amongst his former friends and admirers, who now, opposing his views, wished to forget all about the portrait.

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As they were evidently too much preoccupied with their own troubles to attend to the matter, after some delay I decided to go to Dublin myself and arrange for its settlement. On my arrival I called on the Town Clerk at the Mansion House and stated the object of my mission. He was surprised at the unexpected visit, and still more, I fancy, at my youthful appearance. He was extremely kind, and in a few hours got the necessary signatures authorising payment for the picture and giving instructions as to its delivery. He further conveyed the then Lord Mayor's wish to meet me, and show me some hospitality before I left. I now shrewdly suspect that my friend the Town Clerk, in describing me to the Lord Mayor, gave a fanciful picture of a patriarchal-looking person as, when later I met his lordship, he regarded me with amazement, evidently doubting my identity.

"God bless my soul!" he exclaimed, when reassured on the subject, "just think of a slip of a boy like you painting the Holy Father!"

He was not referring to Sexton, but to my earlier portrait of Leo XIII.

Contemporary with this picture was my portrait of Mr. Michael Davitt, the founder of the Irish League, and perhaps the most interesting member of the party.

He was a singularly fine example of the black Celtic type; his deep-set dark eyes overhung by heavy black eyebrows were equally ready to flash with anger or light up with pleasure, whilst his emotional face quickly reflected by its changes the passing thought of his mind.

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He had a lovable nature, as well as a resentful one. For his friends he could not do too much ; to his political foes he was unrelenting and bitter in the extreme.

A peasant boy of seventeen or eighteen, he was arrested, with a pike in his hand, during the Fenian Rising ; and sentenced, I think, to death, the sentence being afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life.

At Portland, where he served the larger portion of his sentence, he cultivated a taste for literature, his exceptionally good conduct securing him access to the prison library. Gifted with a remarkable memory he absorbed all he read, and in time was practically master of the classics and the higher literature forming the collection in the library.

His unusual application and love of learning were reported to the inspectors of the prison, and as a mark of favour he was allowed to give readings and addresses to the good-conduct prisoners. To attend these readings became the most coveted privilege, and they developed in Davitt a fluency of expression which, later, served him in good stead.

Details of the prison life then existing in England are too horrible for words ; it constituted an outrage on the so-called civilisation of a Christian country. Davitt's evidence before the Parliamentary Committee for the reforming of prisons, in 1886, given from actual knowledge, largely contributed to the improvements since inaugurated.

Only an exceptionally pure and elevated nature could have escaped the pollution of prison life and

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emerge uncontaminated ; such a nature Davitt possessed to an eminent degree.

He lived to be equally honoured by great and small as much in England as in Ireland, and few men went to their graves more esteemed and respected than Michael Davitt.

Let me close my artistic association with the Irish Party by mentioning Mr. John Redmond, the present leader, of whom I painted a portrait.

The great personal regard I feel towards him unites with my appreciation of his exceptional ability. In dealing with his oft-times fractious cohort I admire the tact and judgment he displays, and the dignity and moderation with which he advances his political views in the House of Commons.

He stands apart in that assemblage of mediocrities, and for statesmanlike breadth of view, culture and polish, is not excelled by any living Englishman.

The amenities of Parliamentary life, not always understood by the outside world, are well illustrated by the following incident.

Having dined with Redmond one night in the House of Commons, I afterwards listened to a debate on some Irish question.

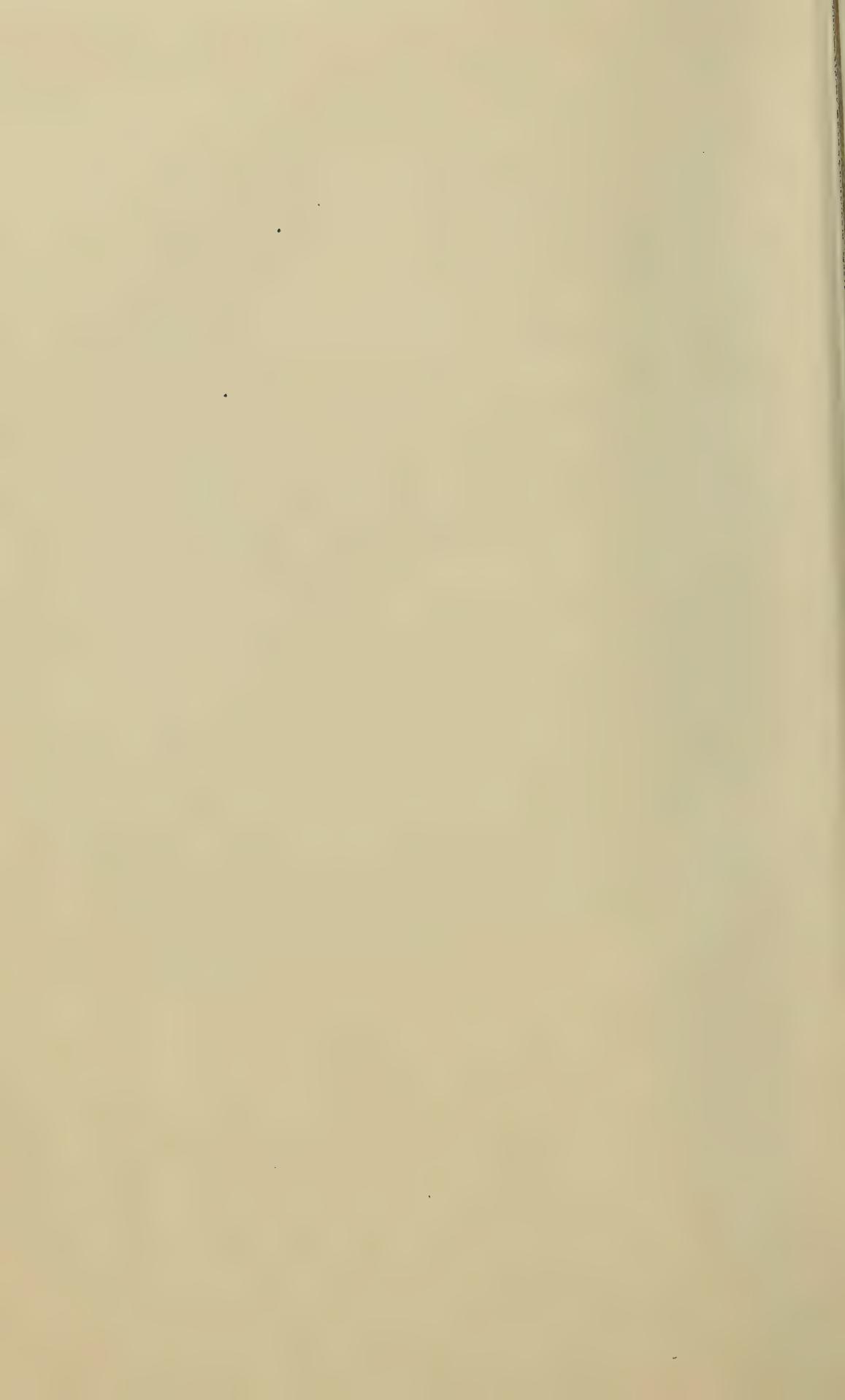
The Minister in charge of the matter was Lord Stanley, then somewhat new to the position he occupied.

He was most bitterly assailed by Nationalist members on account of some alleged iniquities performed by his subordinates in Ireland, and denunciations of the most fiery description were flung at him from the benches over which John



*Painted 1902*

JOHN E. REDMOND, ESQ., M.P.



## London

Redmond presided, calm and composed, with arms folded and eye fixed severely on the Minister.

Lord Stanley rose, evidently nervous, and set about making his answer. It was the usual lame explanation—the facts were against him—so he indulged in formal platitudes, which were received with derision, and soon after the House adjourned.

Later Redmond and I went to meet our better halves, who had also listened to the debate in the ladies' gallery. As we passed under an archway, a man hurried out of a door and ran into us.

Recognising Redmond, he said in an anxious voice :

“ How did you think I got on to-night ? ”

“ Very well, indeed ; capital.”

“ So glad you think so ! Good night.”

“ Who was that ? ” I asked.

“ Lord Stanley.”

Next morning a paper referring to “ a scene ” in the House, described the dignified stand made by Lord Stanley against an unscrupulous and disorderly attack of the Irish members instigated and directed by their shameless leader. “ The right honourable gentleman,” continued the paper, “ in a few words disposed of his unworthy assailants, and we are glad to notice that, in confounding Mr. John Redmond and his tactics, he alluded to that gentleman with a disdain and aversion befitting a Minister of the Crown, as well as one of his high birth and station.”

# Recollections of a Court Painter

## IV

My former pupil, Henry Savage Landor, having returned from his first voyage, the exploration of the Kurile Islands, had produced the first of many books of travel, *The Hairy Ainu*, and was quite a lion. But the writer's youthful appearance and apparently frail delicate physique were the cause of much injustice shown towards him. His statements of dangers encountered and privations undergone during his expedition were often ridiculed, and his facts frequently questioned. Yet he possessed, to my own knowledge, a courage, will, and powers of endurance impossible to be conceived by the arm-chair brigade which judged him.

Most great travellers have been small and frail-looking men; for example my friend Paul du Chaillu, the discoverer of the gorilla, with whom I spent a winter in Morocco, and who, strangely enough, was not unlike an amiable gorilla himself. Paul was quite young, about twenty I think, when he first went to West Africa on adventures bent. There he came across a gorilla and shot it. Realising the importance of his discovery, he decided himself to convey the news to the learned minds in London. But naturalists, so far, had rejected the statement of Herodotus that such an animal existed, considering it a flight of imagination on the part of that "ancient father of lies," and they listened with unbelieving ears to young Du Chaillu's story.

Paul du Chaillu's later triumph over his de-

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tractors was largely due to the support of Professor Owen, the great naturalist, who was one of the first to reverse his early judgment. The man who discovered the gorilla in the nineteenth century then became the idol of the hour, whilst Herodotus, his predecessor of the fourth B.C., turned in his grave, and slept the sleep of the justified.

During our wanderings in Morocco Du Chaillu told me much about his gorilla experiences, of a nature so thrilling and exciting that I cannot resist quoting, in his own words, the story of his first encounter with that progenitor of mankind.

“Presently before us stood an immense male gorilla. He had gone through the jungle on all-fours, but when he saw our party he raised himself erect, and looked us boldly in the face. He stood about a dozen yards from us, and was a sight I shall never forget. Nearly six feet high (he proved six inches shorter), with an immense body, huge chest and great muscular arms, with fierce glaring eyes and a hellish expression of face which seemed to us like some nightmare vision—thus stood before us the king of the African forest. He was not afraid of us. He stood there and beat his breast till it resounded like an immense bass drum, which is their mode of offering defiance, meantime giving vent to roar after roar. His eyes began to flash fiercer fire, as we stood motionless on the defensive, and the crest of short hair which stands on his forehead began to twitch rapidly up and down; whilst his powerful fangs were shown, as he sent forth a thunderous roar. And now truly he reminded

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me of nothing but some hellish dream creature, a being of that hideous order, half-man half-beast, which we find pictured by old artists in some representation of the infernal regions."

As well as the gorilla, Paul du Chaillu first discovered the Pigmies, or "the dwarf tribes," as he called them. These emulated, it seemed, the custom of the Goths and Vandals in diverting a stream for the burial of their chief men; as was done in the case of Genseric, of Alaric, and of Attila; afterwards returning the river to its original bed. Otherwise they buried their dead in hollow trees, filling up the opening with branches and earth.

After our return to London Du Chaillu went to Iceland, and wrote a most interesting book on Scandinavian history in general, full of folklore, sagas, and archæological research. This I think was his last work before he died, universally regretted, and still in the plenitude of his powers.

In 1888 Sir Richard Owen (Professor Owen of Du Chaillu's early days) lived in a cottage at Sheen, Richmond Park. He had been professor of natural history to the royal children, and on his retirement from the directorship of the Natural History Museum, Kensington, Queen Victoria, as a mark of her esteem, presented him with this cottage in the royal park.

I first met him at White Lodge, where he was held in great regard by the Duke and Duchess of Teck, and our acquaintance ripened into a warm friendship. In his prime he was, I believe, a most bitter and pugnacious person to differ with, but no trace of this temperament now



SIR RICHARD OWEN, K.C.B.



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remained ; he was the gentlest and kindest of mortals.

Whilst I painted his portrait he told me many stories of his early life, two of these being of his student days. He was then very poor, and had outgrown his clothes and also his college gown, which was tattered and torn.

One morning, crossing the college quadrangle, he was stopped by a crabbed old Scotch professor of mathematics, who told him that he ought to be ashamed of himself, a great big fellow, to wear such a short and shabby gown.

“It will be *long* enough, sir, before I get another !” meekly responded poor Owen. The professor glared, suspecting levity in the answer, and passed on.

Later in the afternoon he was taking his customary walk with a brother professor of theology, also from Scotland, discussing a knotty religious subject on which they differed bitterly. His companion was emphasizing some point with great earnestness, when suddenly the mathematician burst into a scream of laughter, transfixing the speaker with horror at this unseemly conduct, so unwarranted and so unusual.

“Are ye mad, mon, to behave in this disgraceful manner ?” he asked in angry tones.

“Na, na, I am na mad, but I just see the joke,” answered the other. “Oh ! it was good, vera good—ha ! ha ! ha !”

The outraged theologian drew himself up to his full height, and said :

“Professor M‘Intosh, I‘d have respected ye mair if ye had struck me than told me to my face that I was joking about holy writ.”

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“Na, na, I did not mean that,” was the conciliating answer; and then he told about his meeting a big bony student with a very short gown, and how, when he spoke to him about it, the boy had answered, “It would be LONG enough”—ha! ha! ha! he!—“before he got another!”

“I fail, Mr. M’Intosh, to see ony joke in the nonsense ye’re telling,” said the theologian, whose face had become sterner as the story proceeded, “and wish for nae further acquaintance with ye.”

Swelling with indignation, he turned his back on the professor and walked away. The story goes on that twenty-four hours afterwards he also saw the joke, and nearly burst a blood-vessel; and so Sir Richard used to take it, with variations, through the whole body of slow-witted professors.

The next tale was of a gruesome character.

In Professor Owen’s student days body-snatchers were plentiful, but only the rich physicians could afford the luxuries they offered for sale. The college depended entirely on the bodies of dead paupers for their dissecting schools, and paupers at this particular moment were unusually shy in obliging the students anxiously waiting their demise.

Consequently there was a famine of subjects for dissection, and Owen, then studying the brain, was brought to a standstill for want of a fresh head.

A man having died at the hospital, and the regular attendant being absent, Owen was asked to certify as to the death. Accordingly he went to the hospital, where he found the body already

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in the coffin, which was, however, uncovered. He examined the corpse in the presence of the hall porter (nurses were unknown then), and stating that he wished to draw up his report, and would himself nail down the lid, he sent away the porter, who was only too glad to go. When sure that he was alone, young Owen drew a sharp knife out of his pocket, expeditiously decapitated the defunct, and placed the head in a green baize bag he had brought with him. He then screwed down the coffin, put the bag under his arm, covered himself with a heavy black cloak and sauntered out of the hospital.

What he had done was then a hanging matter, and it behoved him to be careful !

Outside the hospital the ground sloped down to a narrow alley, in which were small hucksters' shops, one of them occupied by the widow of a pirate and slaver, whose record was commonly whispered to have been of the blackest. It was winter, and as Owen hurried down the frozen slope he slipped and fell ; in his effort to save himself convulsively squeezing the head out of the bag. To his horror it rolled down the incline and disappeared into the widow's shop. With the fear of the gallows before him, Owen struggled to his feet. Rushing wildly into the shop he snatched up the head, observing with joy that the widow had fainted, terrified at the gruesome apparition she thought had arisen from the earth.

A report soon circulated in the neighbourhood that the wicked slaver had appeared to his wife from the lower regions, imploring her intercession. The story went that, as the pirate was entreating

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her to pray for him, the devil in a black cloak burst into the room, caught him up and disappeared with his prey in a cloud of brimstone and sulphur. The popular imagination accepted the legend with simple faith ; the widow became the object of much pious attention, whilst Owen, reassured as to his safety, peacefully dissected the source of her popularity.

During the few years I knew him I noticed with solicitude the gradual decay of Sir Richard's mind. Before leaving for Egypt in 1889, I went to see him at Sheen. I found him in bed, very weak and feeble. He was much pleased to see me, but had completely forgotten my name. After about an hour's conversation I got up to take my leave.

"I feel I shall never see you again," he said, as I took his hand in both mine, his eyes dim with tears ; "kiss me, my child, before you go." I bent down and kissed him.

"Do me one more favour," he murmured. "I cannot remember my name ; tell me what it is."

I told him, and as I left the room he was still repeating it to himself, together with the letters K.C.B., &c., which generally followed it in official documents. Such was my last interview with Sir Richard Owen. This once great intellect had concluded its terrestrial task, and soon after my visit soared aloft to that eternal radiance in which the spirits of the illustrious are absorbed.

On the eve of my departure for Egypt I spent the evening with some friends of mine, a charming woman and her husband, just home after

## London

many years spent in India, where he was in the Government service.

During dinner she related the following incident.

Before her marriage, twelve years previously, the fair lady had a suitor passionately devoted to her, whom she liked very much, but her affections were centred on my friend, whom she married, and accompanied to India.

During her long sojourn in that country she indirectly heard that her discarded lover remained a bachelor ; but she never met him.

The evening previous she had been to the opera and to supper at a restaurant with her husband. On their return home, as the night was sultry, she felt disinclined for sleep, and divesting herself of her opera cloak, she leaned over the small balcony overlooking Dover Street, musingly regarding the carriages dashing past in Piccadilly : her mind turned unaccountably to earlier days and to the man she had not seen nor thought of for many years. She conjured up visions of a past full of emotion ; and, as she did so, her fingers tenderly touched a diamond ring he had given her as a memento of his undying devotion.

With a shock she awoke from her pleasant dreaming. The ring had slipped from her listless fingers, fallen on the pavement below, and rolled into the gutter.

With her eyes fixed on the spot she called to her husband, smoking peacefully whilst perusing the evening paper in the room behind.

“ Jim ! I have dropped one of my rings ; run down, like a dear, I will show you the spot from here. I can see it glistening.”

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As Jim leisurely put down his paper and prepared to descend, she saw out of the corner of her eye a man turn into Dover Street from Piccadilly, and rapidly come up the street.

As he passed underneath the balcony he was attracted by the glittering object, and stooped to pick it up.

“That is my ring, which I have just dropped,” she said; “will you kindly give it to my husband, who is now going down for it.”

The finder, surprised at hearing the voice above, looked up, and as he did so the light from the open window fell on his face.

It was the man she had been thinking of, the donor of the very ring he held in his hand.

## EGYPT

### I

**P**ORT SAID has developed into a large town with the usual European characteristics ; but twenty years ago, when I first visited it, the outcasts of the East and of Southern Europe had made it their headquarters. Every type of villainy was to be studied in its streets.

Levantines, Syrians, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Maltese, and the riff-raff of Egypt itself, carried on their various nefarious occupations more or less with impunity. Night-time, devoted to every form of vicious entertainment, was particularly dangerous to the visitor who, like Haroun al Raschid, ventured out alone to see the sights ; he frequently met with foul play, robbery with violence being a quite common occurrence.

The few native policemen in the place occupied themselves principally with the quarrelling donkey boys, amongst whom they rushed from time to time with their long canes, hitting indiscriminately right and left. The more dangerous element they left severely alone ; a consideration not alone prompted by prudence, but invariably rewarded with a share of the plunder by the grateful thief. Complaisance meaning a comfortable addition to their pay,

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undue interference at critical moments a thrust of the knife, the Egyptian policemen naturally preferred to let mercy season justice.

The night of my arrival I dined with the Consul, to whom I had a letter, and met there the representative of the Fire Insurance Company doing most business at Port Said. He was a bright, intelligent young fellow, thoroughly conversant with the ways of the people he had to deal with ; most of whom, amongst other accomplishments, were past-masters in the art of incendiарism.

He told me many amusing stories of his experiences, but nothing so quaint as what occurred that same evening, and was witnessed by myself. Dinner finished, coffee was being served, when a messenger arrived stating that a fire had broken out in the shop of a Syrian Jew some distance up the principal street.

The insurance agent hurriedly took leave. I asked permission of my host to accompany him, saying *au revoir* to the other guests, who remained indifferent to such everyday incidents as conflagrations. As we ran towards the scene of the fire, the agent told me that the man whose premises were burning was well known to him, and had already mulcted the Insurance Company of compensation for three fires within the past twelve months.

The Company, convinced that a fraud had been perpetrated, was naturally very sore, but had been unable up to the present to verify its suspicions. Its representative was in hopes that on this occasion he might be able to catch the man *en flagrant délit*.

As we turned a corner the otherwise dark street

## Egypt

was illuminated by a glare, and we soon arrived before the burning premises, a large two-storied wooden structure. People were running from all directions towards the blaze, which had now complete control of the front of the house. My friend, however, never stopped, but running rapidly farther on, turned suddenly down a dark alley, beckoning me to follow. He doubled again at the end of it, and we found ourselves before a six-foot wooden fence, skirting a small yard at the back of the burning premises.

I gave him a leg-up and he pulled me after him ; we then dropped into the yard. There was no sign of fire, and not a soul was visible.

The ground-floor windows were closed with shutters, and quite dark, but as we looked a glimmer of light appeared through a crack in one of the shutters ; and towards this the agent sprang lightly. He looked through it for a moment, and then motioned me to do the same.

The crack was sufficiently wide to give one a good view of a small room, the floor of which was littered with small packing-cases, paper, empty cardboard boxes, and other rubbish. Moving amongst this was an elderly man, whose features were unmistakably those of a Jew ; he held in one hand a candle, and in the other a large tin can, from which he was sprinkling some liquid.

I ceded my place, and as my companion watched intently, I asked in a whisper what the man was pouring out of the can.

“ Paraffin,” he replied.

After a short pause, without removing his eye from the chink, he whispered again :

“ He is setting fire to it.”

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A second afterwards we heard a key turn in a lock, and the door opened softly. The agent planted himself in the shadow near, and I followed his example. The Jew appeared, gave a hurried look around, locked the door behind him, and darted towards the gate in the fence, which we had found locked. Like a flash the agent was upon him, and when he turned a startled face, a revolver met his affrighted eyes.

“Caught at last, my friend!” exclaimed the agent in exultant tones. “Better come quietly to the station; open that door, and be quick about it.”

The other, stupefied for a moment by the unexpected turn things had taken, quickly recovered his self-possession; and, casting a furtive look at the room behind, which by now was blazing away, opened the gate, and we walked up the still deserted alley. After we had gone a few paces he suddenly stopped, as if a thought had struck him, and addressed the agent in a confidential tone.

“Why can’t we arrange this little business between ourselves,” he suggested; “why make a fuss about it? Let me get the insurance money and I’ll give you a quarter of it.”

“Don’t talk to me like that,” answered the Englishman angrily. “Come along, will you?”

“No, no; wait a minute,” was the reply. “I’ll make it a third; now, that’s a fair offer, isn’t it?”

The agent shook his head, and taking him by the arm, moved forward. The Jew, however, shrank back, clasping his hands.

“My God! my God! but you are hard to

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bargain with ; make it halves, make it halves, my dear friend, and I swear I am a loser."

"Drop it, and come along," was the only response his generous proposal received. As he was propelled forward he clung to the agent with both hands, making a last desperate effort to bribe him.

"My friend, my very dear friend, you are young, and money is good, very good . . . I will be a father to you . . . will give you two-thirds . . . there . . . think of that . . . two-thirds . . . it is ruin to me, but I will give it . . . now we will shake hands and say no more about this matter."

He spoke with great feeling, no doubt regretting the sacrifice he was obliged to make, but evidently he thought the matter arranged ; concluding that the agent had only held out to obtain better terms. His disappointment was great and his contempt for the agent unmitigated, when the latter definitely spurned his offers ; in the Jew's eyes, an incomprehensible and idiotic proceeding, and it was with a look of profound disgust that he accompanied us to the station.

On my arrival in Cairo I stayed at the immortal "Shepheard's" for a short time before settling my plans definitely for the winter.

No more fascinating spot to a newcomer could be found than the terrace in front of the hotel, before which passed a ceaseless *va et vient* of Oriental life ; a veritable kaleidoscope of colours and interesting humanity. Trains of camels, laden with dates and other produce

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from the desert, with Berber or Soudanese drivers bobbing up and down on their backs, passed to their destination in the Bazaar ; then would come a smart Parisian carriage containing ladies of the harem, the horses preceded by two running Syces, shouting lustily to clear the way ; on the box seat by the driver the ubiquitous eunuch. Now and then a marriage procession would wend its way, to the accompaniment of music and singing ; the bride borne in a palanquin, attached to two camels richly caparisoned in scarlet housings gay with tassels and feathers, the palanquin itself covered with crimson silk and lavishly decorated, with the curtains closely drawn, so that no profane eye should contemplate the lady's beauty. Other camels would follow, also gaily caparisoned, with the bridegroom and his friends proudly astride ; whilst the rear was brought up by innumerable donkeys, bearing veiled ladies, other friends, and relations ; the musicians who accompanied the procession on foot, as well as a host of small boys, making all the noise they could.

“Oh, my ! isn't that cute !” cried a Chicago acquaintance who had arrived with me from Port Said.

“Bully to look at, but no honeymoon for me, thank you, on camel back !” replied her admiring compatriot.

He had been the previous day to the Pyramids, where he adventured for the first time on a camel, and had not yet quite recovered from the nauseating effects of the ride. To those with weak digestions the jerky movement backwards and forwards is a very unpleasant experience ;

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which can only be likened to the suffering often felt on board a vessel, and it is frequently followed by the same disastrous results.

Possibly this is the reason why the camel is called "the ship of the desert."

Disdainfully regarding the crowd of Fellahs or peasants running by his side importuning him for some favour, an Egyptian official of some importance passed on a handsome white donkey. These pure white donkeys are remarkably fine creatures and very valuable, a good specimen commanding as high a price as £80. They require little care, and will eat anything, whilst their powers of endurance are extraordinary.

Besides this constantly changing and interesting panorama immediately below us, a crowd of itinerant Levantines and Syrian traders in spurious antiquities and all kinds of worthless bric-à-brac are striving, by every ingenious method, to attract our attention.

The donkey boys, screaming the merits of their respective steeds, and fighting tooth and nail for the patron when he appeared amongst them, added considerably to the prevailing noise; whilst the donkeys themselves beguiled the weary wait for customers by settling family differences with unlimited braying and kicking.

Altogether it was a bewildering sight to one unaccustomed to Oriental life. The dust, noise, glare, and constant movement after a time deadened the senses, and the scene was finally contemplated in a semi-conscious manner through blurred and dreamy eyes.

Tewfik Pasha was then Khedive of Egypt, and under his mild sway the country was recovering

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from the effects of the oppression and misgovernment of his father, ex-Khedive Ismail, then an exile in Constantinople.

The Armenians are undoubtedly the ablest, as well as the most unscrupulous element in the East. There is an Arabic saying, that it takes so many Christians to fool a Jew, so many Jews to fool a Greek, but innumerable Greeks to fool an Armenian ; and they deserve this tribute to their undoubted intelligence, quickness of perception, suavity of manner, and slippery ways.

When Sir Philip Currie was promoted to Rome after his *débâcle* at Constantinople over the Armenian trouble, I met him there, Lady Currie having been an old friend of mine before her marriage to Sir Philip.

Sir Philip was completely governed by his wife, who was a remarkably gifted and charming woman. She possessed a highly strung emotional nature, was easily led by her sympathies and her affections ; and she in her turn was under the subtle influence of a clever designing Armenian maid, presumably a spy, who played on her feelings and engaged her sympathies.

Through her mistress this woman governed the mind of the Ambassador ; and there is no doubt that, by suggestion, she moulded his despatches to the British Government, and swayed his official attitude towards the Porte.

Sir Philip Currie's attitude, indeed, became at last so biassed in favour of the Armenians, and consequently so irritating to the Turkish Government, that the Foreign Office had no option but to remove him, softening the blow, however, by giving him the Embassy in Rome.

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In his case truly, to find the source of the trouble, *cherchez la femme*.

This digression is intended to illustrate the underhand methods employed when expedient by a nationality which played no small part in the history of Egypt, and which helped to despoil that unhappy country.

Accomplished and unscrupulous thieves themselves, Ismail and his predecessor Said Pasha loved the society of clever rogues, and particularly favoured the Armenians. It frequently happened that they were robbed in return for their partiality, but if the theft or swindle were distinguished by ingenuity they usually pardoned the culprit, being compensated for their loss by the enjoyment his cleverness afforded. The two following stories relating to Said Pasha were told me by an official of the Treasury.

During the first great Exhibition in Paris Said Pasha, then Khedive of Egypt, paid a visit to the French capital, where he was received with marked distinction by the Emperor and Empress, then much interested in the Suez Canal project.

Whilst visiting the Exhibition Said Pasha was greatly impressed by eight enormous mirrors, the largest he had ever seen, their attractions enhanced by lavishly ornate gold frames.

One of his entourage, an Armenian, suggested to his khedivial mind the popularity he would achieve in the harem if the ladies of his household could contemplate their ample charms in such mirrors, so immense, so rich in gold and decoration. The bait took, and he ordered the eight mirrors for his palace in Cairo. In

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due course they arrived at their destination, were put in place, and the Khedive was happy in the joy and wonderment of his many ladies, whilst the Armenian rose high in his master's favour.

The account was immediately presented at the treasury and settled ; the charge per mirror being 100,000 francs—800,000 in all.

The Khedive was furious when he heard of the sum that had been paid, he having signed the order for payment, but without troubling to look into the account ; for he remembered noticing the price in Paris, 10,000 francs per mirror. He sent for the Armenian, and upbraided him for his conduct. That gentleman respectfully protested against the reflection on his honour, declared that the tickets were still on the mirrors, and appealed to His Highness to examine them himself.

The Khedive hurried to do so, and there, sure enough, on each mirror the price was marked in plain figures—100,000 francs.

The nimble Armenian had simply added a cipher to each ticket before the merchandise left Paris. There was nothing more to be said for the moment, and at the earliest opportunity the Armenian left Cairo with his spoils.

Later, after inquiries in Paris, the nature of the swindle was discovered, and no one laughed more heartily than the Khedive himself.

In Said Pasha's time barrel-organs were unknown in Egypt. The fertile brain of one of his Armenian friends conceived a scheme in which a hurdy-gurdy, secretly imported, played a pro-

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minent part. Said had a passion for novelties of every kind; consequently when one day this friend informed him that, at much expense and trouble, he had secured a fresh delight, which His Highness would be the first to enjoy, the Khedive listened eagerly.

It was a new and marvellous invention, declared the Armenian, a boat so constructed that when it glided through the water a number of delicate instruments were automatically set in motion, and strains of exquisite music emitted.

For His Highness's delectation he had brought the inventor from Italy to fix the machinery to a dahabieh, and trusted in the course of a few days to have everything ready for a trip up the Nile, when His Highness could judge the wonderful merits of the musical vessel for himself.

Said Pasha communicated the news to the ladies of his harem, where it created much excitement, as well as delight, when he invited them to accompany him.

On the appointed day the Khedive and his harem went on board the richly decorated and newly painted dahabieh, where was found awaiting him a sumptuous lunch and unlimited champagne, supplied by his thoughtful host.

As the boat cast off sounds of music were heard, increasing as the wind filled the sails; and to the accompaniment of such melody as they had never before heard, the ladies partook of the good things before them, and Said did full justice to the champagne.

It was a most enjoyable and delightful excursion.

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On his return Said Pasha, congratulating its owner most warmly, announced his intention of buying the dahabieh there and then. The Armenian demurred; the price was high, the novelty unique. Said insisted, and finally a sum was named which made even the extravagant Said wince.

However, he gave an order for the sum demanded; and his friend, who just then had some other important business to attend to in Damascus, immediately collected the money and left Cairo.

Some time after his departure Said proposed another pleasant trip on the Nile, and off he went with his belongings, as before. Evidently something was wrong with the musical arrangement, as, although well under way, no melody was heard—no other sound than the rippling of the water against the sides of the dahabieh!

The Khedive, perplexed by this silence, ordered an inspection to be made under the deck, to see what was wrong.

A strange-looking square object was found, with a handle, but no machinery of any kind. Out of curiosity this handle was turned; when, to the general surprise, similar sounds were heard as on the occasion of the first excursion, then supposed to come from the action of the water. In reality the deception had been arranged by means of a common barrel-organ, which a slave in this secret recess had been commanded to play, from the moment the dahabieh started with its august burden until its return, when he was released from his hiding-place.

After Said had acquired the magic boat there

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was no slave to turn the handle, and the Armenian had been too busy with his arrangements for a hurried departure to remember such a trifling omission.

The Khedive was at first deeply mortified, but subsequently expressed his admiration at the audacity and the cleverness of the swindle. The organ was removed to the harem, where it inspired the eunuchs with lofty thoughts, as, in turn, they wound the handle round and round ; and the successful rogue was requested to return to Cairo, so much had he risen in Said's esteem. Being reassured as to his personal safety, he appeared before the Khedive, who received him with open arms ; and eventually he rose to a position of high distinction.

## II

The Duke of Teck had given me a letter to Sir Evelyn Baring,<sup>1</sup> and shortly after its presentation I had the gratification of meeting that most eminent of British administrators, *de facto* sovereign of Egypt. With little previous knowledge of Sir Evelyn, whose great work was then beginning to bear fruit, in the short time spent in Cairo before we met I had observed the dread and respect associated with his name.

From the moment I looked into his clear honest eye I was attracted towards him, whilst his fresh, almost boyish manner won my heart entirely.

He had the most wonderful complexion that I have ever seen in a man of mature age ; a maiden's blush of tenderest pink fading away

<sup>1</sup> The present Earl of Cromer.

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into ivory white, the blue eyes adding to the harmony of colour.

Many a social beauty would sell her soul for such a complexion, but I never remarked that Sir Evelyn gave himself airs in consequence of it ; on the contrary, he accepted the gifts of Providence with modesty, and blushed a warmer pink if you drew attention to it.

His face was a strong one, purely Anglo-Saxon in type, with something of the bull-dog ; enough, when he was aroused, to make his enemies wish to get out of the way.

A direct nature such as his rarely adopts a middle course ; it likes or dislikes with equal staunchness, and its course of action decided upon, carries it through, "à la Roosevelt," with a big stick. Consequently, in a very brief time you knew exactly where you were in Sir Evelyn's estimation ; and either after a short probation entered the ranks of the elect, or joined the army of the damned beyond redemption.

I found favour in his eye and became ones of the elect. His goodwill was returned a thousandfold, and as I knew him better and more fully understood the great qualities of his heart, ever open to a good and kindly action, my feeling towards him ripened into an affectionate admiration.

As is frequently the case with Englishmen, an underlying shyness of disposition made his manner unintentionally brusque at times ; but it was deliberately so when he had some slippery, underhand opponent to deal with. By such a person he was invariably described as "harsh and overbearing."



*Painted 1891*

THE LADY HOWARD DE WALDEN



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It was delightful to watch him, as I often did, at the lawn tennis court at Cairo, when, having thrown off the cares of official life, he would devote himself to the game with the enthusiasm of a schoolboy, smashing and serving the ball with youthful agility.

The luxurious corrupt Pasha lolling in his carriage would, as he passed, cast a scornful glance at the performance; a scandalous and improper one from his point of view, and beyond words undignified in so great a personage. Perhaps also in the Oriental's heart there lurked a fear that some day he too might be served and smashed in the same nimble manner, and with as little ceremony. Such a prospect must have given him food for thought as he continued his drive.

In devotion and admiration for her lord, Lady Baring resembled Mrs. Gladstone.

She possessed a sympathetic charm of manner which endeared her to those who enjoyed her friendship, whilst in many vexatious moments Sir Evelyn must have appreciated the solace and comfort which only a helpmeet so richly endowed could afford him.

His official enemies at this period were numerous; the most prominent being the French Minister, an otherwise amiable person, whose principal laurels were won in a lighter sphere than diplomacy. In ordinary circumstances the activity of M. de Reverseaux would have been harmless, but under the conditions then prevailing in Cairo it became a thorn in the Consul-General's side.

This was due to the fact that the French

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Government strenuously supported its Minister, whilst the Foreign Office, irresolute, and fearing complications with France, did not always give Sir Evelyn the backing he needed.

An illustration occurs to me.

The European chemists in Cairo were in the habit of dispensing to the natives useless, worthless, and frequently noxious concoctions, as medicines. When their nefarious proceedings were brought to Sir Evelyn's notice he determined to put a stop to them.

He laid the matter before the young Khedive, who heartily approved of Sir Evelyn's proposal, and an order was issued that, for the future, all drugs sold by chemists should be submitted to examination by qualified inspectors. This is the course followed in most European countries, and in none more rigorously than in France.

The Cairo chemists, of course, raised a howl of virtuous indignation ; and the French Minister protested, stating that his Government would not permit such an insulting proceeding, so far as French citizens were concerned.

I happened to be with the Khedive the same morning that this decision was officially communicated, and he was most indignant. He had been educated in Vienna, knew Paris well, and spoke the language perfectly ; in fact, French was the language he always used with Europeans.

“ The French,” he said, “ consider their civilisation the best ; a pattern for humanity to follow. Yet the very inspection they insist on in their own country to prevent dishonesty they deny to me here in my own dominions. *C'est infame!* ”

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However, infamous or not, the British Government did not properly support Sir Evelyn, and his proposal fell through, so far as the French chemists were concerned.

It would have simplified Sir Evelyn's task considerably if the principle of "J'y suis, j'y reste" had been openly adopted by his Government, instead of the virtuous promise (wasted on an unbelieving Europe) to eventually evacuate Egypt being held forth.

These were the days before the "entente cordiale." John Bull and the Republic had not yet discovered how deeply they loved each other, nor united in that fond embrace which is now so edifying a spectacle.

The Consulate was then situated in an unpretentious building near the Continental Hotel, the present palatial residence on the banks of the Nile being yet undreamt of, and its site "un terrain vague," a sort of dumping ground for the refuse of the city.

I moved from Shepheard's into the Continental Hotel, and Sir Evelyn having commissioned me to paint his portrait, I spent a great deal of my time either with him or in the chancellory, where I was on very friendly terms with the *personnel*.

Mr. Bax Ironside, since promoted to Minister, was first secretary, but Harry Boyle, a countryman of mine, the chief's right-hand man and confidential secretary, was my great friend. With him I spent many a pleasant hour.

Boyle had a gentle timid manner, which the ribald spirits in the chancellory explained by the fiction that he had the full Mohammedan com-

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plement of wives in the Syrian quarter, and that these ladies led him a terrible life.

In any chaffing match, however, he easily won. He was always good-humoured, and at times his witty retorts gave the young official minds of his colleagues something to ponder over and to unravel. The Consulate staff knew little of Egypt or the Egyptians, and disdained to study the subject. With the exception of Boyle, an automatic copying-machine would possibly have served the chief just as well.

But Boyle had passed most of his life in Egypt. He thoroughly understood the elements Sir Evelyn had to deal with, and his knowledge of the intricacies of Oriental life, united with his quick intuitive judgment, must have been of inestimable value to his chief.

As he spoke and wrote Arabic like a native, the services of a more or less corrupt Syrian or Greek interpreter were dispensed with ; thereby assuring the Consul-General against divulgence of secret matter.

Boyle's share in his chief's great and difficult task was perhaps a modest one, but he was not, I think, the least of the pillars supporting that tower of strength.

The chief had one other faithful lieutenant, in whom he reposed complete confidence, Mr. Eldon Gorst (afterwards Sir Eldon, Consul-General of Egypt), then a secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Gorst sometimes reminded me of Paul du Chaillu in appearance, but his features were more sharply defined, and his expression shrewder.

Young as he was, his marked ability already

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gave promise of a brilliant future, and his training under Sir Evelyn eminently qualified him for the great position he later occupied.

He once acted as a second for me in the matter of a duel, the nature of which is worth relating.

During a ball I looked for my partner in the next waltz, and at last found her sitting with some other people. I made my bow ; she at once arose, and off we went dancing.

I had paid no attention to her companions when I claimed my dance ; being much too engrossed in the object of my search.

We enjoyed our dance immensely and after some refreshment danced the next waltz also. I then conducted the lady back to her friends, and sought a new partner.

The next morning I was half asleep when my servant announced the Count Della Sala.

Sala Pasha was a well-known character in Cairo, and a friend of mine ; accordingly I requested him to come in. As he entered I noticed he was dressed even more immaculately than usual, and after the usual formalities he opened his business.

He said that his mission was a painful one. I had the previous night grossly insulted his oldest friend, Colonel — (I really forget his name), on whose behalf he came to demand an instant apology or recourse to arms.

I rubbed my eyes ; was I dreaming ? An insult to a man I did not know, and had never heard of before. The thing was impossible.

I asked Della Sala to repeat his statement ; and he did so, in a more truculent spirit, evidently rejoicing at my confusion.

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I indignantly protested against his imputation that I had insulted any man deliberately, still less a man unknown to me. On the face of it, his contention was impossible.

"You refuse to apologise," he said, after a pause.

"I certainly do," I replied, "for an imaginary offence."

"Then be good enough to appoint your second, as nothing but blood will now wipe out the injury," he answered, taking up his hat and stick.

"I have the choice of weapons, I believe?"

"Certainly, as the challenged party."

"Your man being a colonel is, I suppose, a good swordsman?"

"The best in Europe," was the confident reply, delivered with an emphasis of gesture peculiar to Della Sala, and intended to convey to my mind the superior quality of the carving intended for my anatomy.

"Then I choose pistols."

Della Sala seemed to think my choice in rather bad taste; and after some polite remarks about the weather, took his leave, with my assurance that the matter should be attended to at once.

I then dressed and sought Eldon Gorst, into whose ears I poured my tale of woe, and he very kindly undertook the necessary office of "second," apprising Della Sala to that effect.

They had a meeting to arrange preliminaries, and Gorst afterwards told me that at this meeting Della Sala showed only one desire—blood he wanted, blood he meant to have, his sanguinary demands that the supply should come from me being increased by the knowledge that there

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was no possibility of his being called upon for a contribution.

There were many meetings between the two seconds before the matter was cleared up. A duel rarely came in Della Sala's way, and he made the most of this *opera bouffe* affair.

All the etiquette required in a serious matter of the kind he strictly maintained ; and any effort of Gorst to treat it as otherwise was severely reprobated.

The cause of this "storm in a teacup" was simply the following.

When I asked the fair lady for my dance, the gallant colonel (an Austrian) happened to be whispering sweet nothings into her ear, and as she left him without ceremony, he transferred a different order of feelings to my account.

She did not return after the dance, and these feelings took a diabolical turn ; from that moment only my prostrate body could satisfy his desire for vengeance, and the same night he sought out Della Sala, who gladly undertook the mission on which he came to see me the following morning.

As it became evident that I was not aware of this "page d'amour," Gorst succeeded in convincing the disappointed Sala that, like Bayard, I was "sans peur" and also "sans reproche."

So there the matter ended, to every one's satisfaction except Count Della Sala's. He relinquished his part with deep regret ; not altogether pleased with his principal, who, he seemed to consider, should have fought, if only to give his second the pleasure of assisting at the duel.

During this time my portrait of Sir Evelyn was making good progress, and I spent many

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pleasant hours at the Consulate, in the chancellory of which I was painting the picture. On one occasion the Consul-General told me many interesting stories of the different forms of corruption he had succeeded in abolishing; and amongst them mentioned the barefaced gambling which once prevailed openly in Cairo, such as roulette, cards, &c. After much difficulty, he said, he had succeeded in closing all the gambling dens; and in that respect Cairo could now show a clean record to the whole world.

I listened amazed to this statement.

On my many wanderings, my habit has been to study the customs and characteristics of the people with whom I sojourn; and in Cairo my most amusing evenings were spent in some one or other of the myriad gambling hells, conducted in the most flagrantly open manner, which abounded in every street of the city.

There was no attempt at privacy; on the contrary, these resorts were brilliantly lit up, and if you were too virtuous to play, you could watch the roulette-wheel turning from the street outside.

The cheating with this roulette was delightfully simple and primitive. When the money staked was chiefly on black, red always turned up, and *vice versa*. For some time I wondered how the trick was done, only discovering the secret by accident. I dropped a coin, and, stooping to pick it up, noticed a piece of string attached to the toe of the Syrian "croupier," the other end communicating with the table. By some contrivance connected with the string, he regulated the colour into which the ball was to fall.

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After that discovery I backed the colour on which there was least money, and always won.

There was another game still more profitable to its proprietor, and equally popular.

This was a cut-throat form of baccarat, with a *cagnotte*.

The players—perhaps twenty of them—sat around a table, with a croupier in the centre. Each played with his neighbour; and whoever turned up eight or nine with a service of two cards, won the money staked by the dealer; and so the game made its round indefinitely.

As the majority of the players were dragomans, waiters in the hotels, interpreters, and small traders—Greeks, Jews, Syrians, &c.—the stakes were limited. But the magnitude of the profit was great in proportion.

Let us suppose the first dealer bets five shillings; his opponent puts up the same amount. The cards are dealt, examined, and one throws down his hand; he has eight, the other having six, loses.

Before the winner, however, takes his winnings the croupier abstracts 10 per cent. of the total, which he places in the *cagnotte*, a bowl on the table, emptied from time to time by the proprietor.

The winner did not mind the trifling percentage, and the loser was indifferent; but it never struck either that before the end of the game, possibly 4 A.M., all the money staked went into the *cagnotte*.

If they knew they evidently did not care. The excitement of the game sufficed for their pleasure.

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Having spent some hours the previous night in such a gambling den as I describe, my astonishment at Sir Evelyn's remark can be conceived.

"Things must have been pretty bad in those days," I said, "judging by what goes on at present."

"What do you mean?" he inquired.

"Well," I answered, "you can flutter as much as you like at roulette a stone's-throw from the Consulate."

"Impossible; absolutely impossible," he cried. "I never heard of such a thing; you must be dreaming."

I smiled deprecatingly.

"Come one evening, and we will have a flutter together," I suggested; but the suggestion was not well received: a lion arose, indignant, its bristling mane and angry eye betokening danger to the unwary.

I changed the conversation.

Later in the evening Sir Evelyn and I sat together, the soothing influence of a cigarette conducing to a calm.

He had been thinking, thinking hard; and when I told him all I had seen, he thought all the harder. The Consul-General really knew nothing of Cairo night-life, and depended on his subordinates and their reports for his information.

He had decreed that gambling places should be closed, and the fulfilment of the order was duly reported by the Chief of Police. Sir Evelyn, therefore, concluded that Cairo was purged of that particular sin. Things went on,

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however, just the same, and might have done so indefinitely had it not been for my casual remark.

When Sir Evelyn fully realised the manner in which his order had been disregarded, he was transformed into an active volcano, which later overwhelmed the Chief of Police with its burning lava!

The following night I sauntered forth for my favourite recreation, but not a single brightly-lit haunt was open! not a game of roulette to be played for love or money!

A raid had been made by the police, and quite a number were still on duty, watching the shut up premises.

I joined a group of habitués who were lamenting their privation, when a friendly voice suggested that, if we were to ring the bell in a certain house around the corner three times, we might see some friends. The voice belonged to one of the policemen, who, seeing we were good men and true, thus indicated the whereabouts of the departed ones whom it had been his painful duty to help to eject earlier in the evening.

### III

Sir Francis Grenfell relinquished his post of Sirdar of the Egyptian army soon after my arrival, and I met his successor, Colonel Kitchener, now Lord Kitchener, at dinner at the Consulate.

No greater contrast could be found than that between the two commanders. The former,

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genial and cordial, with a pleasant smile for every one ; the latter, cold and unsympathetic, with a steel-grey eye which chilled you.

The chief had the highest opinion of the new Sirdar, and after events proved how true his judgment was. Lord Charles Beresford, of whom I painted a portrait soon after, was also present at this dinner party, and told a very amusing story about Lord Dufferin and himself, when in the "Eighties" they happened to meet in Cairo, and with a number of friends went for a donkey ride to the Pyramids.

As they ambled along, Lord Charles suggested a race to his compatriot ; backing the South against the North of Ireland. Lord Dufferin, representing the North, at once consented. Off they started, with the others following, cheering and encouraging their respective choice.

In the memory of man no one had ever seen Lord Dufferin in any other attire but a frock-coat and top-hat ; on this occasion he wore his usual garb. The pace became furious ; Lord Charles, with knees and feet in active employ, his cane hard at work, urged his gallant steed, in impassioned language, to forge ahead ; whilst Lord Dufferin, with coat-tails flying behind, was similarly employed. Neck to neck, they sped along, each striving, with every argument likely to influence a donkey's mind, to outpace the other, and never did they struggle to win a laurel as they did to win that race.

When the end was near, and the chances still equal, Lord Dufferin's stick broke near the handle ; and black despair crept into his heart as the donkey, with inward thanksgiving, lessened

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its pace. Then Lord Dufferin had one of his great inspirations.

Seizing his tall hat, with might and main he belaboured the astonished donkey, to the accompaniment of speed-inspiring shouts of :

“Gee-up, gee-up, ye devil !”

The donkey was accustomed to all known forms of persuasion, but the tall hat, in that capacity, was not familiar ; and its unpleasant contact filled his mind with a new apprehension. With a bray of terror, he sprang forward, and, in a vain effort to escape from the uncanny emblem of civilisation, passed Lord Charles and won the race !

A protest was lodged. It was contended that the application of the hat, by outraging the feelings of the donkey, gave an undue advantage, which was not counterbalanced by the loss of the stick. These and many other weighty arguments were discussed, whilst Lord Dufferin contemplated the remains of the offending object, wondering how he was to return to Cairo bereft of that ensign of office. The race was eventually awarded to him ; and he returned to Cairo in borrowed plumes, this being the one and only occasion that Lord Dufferin was ever seen divorced from his beloved top-hat.

Lord Dufferin originated many of the reforms in Egypt which Sir Evelyn later carried out. He was ambassador in Rome when I met him, and his kindness to me there whilst I was down with fever I shall never forget.

He possessed to a pre-eminent degree the highest qualities of the Irish race. His manners were perfect, his wit subtle and refined, his intelligence remarkable, and his accomplishments

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unlimited. Amongst the latter his artistic ability was remarkable, some of his water-colours being worthy of Turner. His exceptionally brilliant career is now a matter of history; but, if the paradox may be allowed, he himself was more brilliant than his history.

The Post Office of Cairo, in the neighbourhood of which I resided for a short time, occupied the former palace of a one-time Minister of Finance in Khedive Ismail's time. It had been confiscated by that unscrupulous ruler, together with the wealth accumulated by the unfortunate owner, under circumstances of unusual perfidy.

On one occasion, when at the height of his power, enjoying the most envied and favoured smiles of Ismail, this Minister of Finance was invited, as a particular mark of condescension, to dine with his sovereign. It was during a Cabinet meeting that this flattering command was given, and when the others dispersed, he entered the carriage with Ismail, and drove to the palace of the Khedive on the opposite bank of the Nile.

On the way Ismail, who was in wonderful spirits, told the most amusing stories; keeping the Minister in a constant roar of laughter.

Never had His Highness been so condescending, never so entirely good-humoured!

The Minister, overjoyed by such signal marks of favour, regretted when so delightful a drive came to an end. The palace reached, he followed Ismail inside, and as they ascended the stairs, the Khedive told him the choicest story of all; the narration continuing until they reached the great reception room, where Ismail excused himself,

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going to his apartment, leaving his guest still heartily laughing at the tale just concluded.

In the happiest frame of mind the Minister continued to smoke his cigarette, conjuring up visions of great possibilities ; when suddenly a door silently opened, and four colonels of the guard appeared.

At their sight the sanguine flush of pleasure faded from his face. He understood but too well the tragic significance of their appearance in that manner !

Not a feature, however, changed. With Oriental resignation he accepted his fate ; but his teeth closed tightly on the cigarette and bit it through.

The end fell to the ground.

He followed the colonels ; and was never afterwards heard of.

I had met Ismail after his downfall five or six years before. He was then staying at the Berkeley Hotel in London with George Smart, an old friend of mine, who had been master of the horse, or something of the sort, to the ex-Khedive in his palmy days.

Ismail was then a short, fat, elderly man of a low and very vulgar type, the kind of podgy individual usually represented in comic papers as a pork butcher.

I first encountered him when, with the Grand Duke Michael of Russia, I lunched at an adjoining table.

Some time later I went to lunch in the same restaurant, and on this occasion he mistook me for the Grand Duke.

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Whilst I looked around undecided in the middle of the room, he came forward with much ceremony, overjoyed to see Monseigneur again. After exchanging courtesies in French, he returned to his table, where I noticed Smart was seated, and I found mine.

George Smart afterwards told me why he had showered such exceptional attention on me, a distinction I had failed to understand at the time. I fancy Smart, who loved a joke, did the mixing up on purpose!

The extravagance of Ismail's harem, and family in general, passed all belief. An item for velvet alone, for one year, was £100,000 sterling ; and the cost of the many other articles of ladies' attire reached proportionate figures.

On one occasion, having imbibed freely, Ismail was in excellent spirits ; and the particular lady then enjoying his attentions took advantage of the tender moment, and complained of want of money. In grateful recognition of her charms, he wrote an order on the treasury, authorising her to take all the silver she could carry away ; supposing, of course, she would take or send a hand-bag for the purpose.

He little knew the lady.

She sent her eunuch early next morning (whilst Ismail was still slumbering) to the treasury with the order, and the largest van to be found in Cairo.

The van was filled with bags of silver, practically depleting the treasury, and returned to the harem, where the treasure was safely deposited and hidden away.

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Ismail himself was the son of a slave girl ; a good-looking Nubian, belonging to one of the ladies of the harem. His father one day saw her by accident, took a passing fancy, with the result that, whilst his regular wives were pondering on the subject, she, with more expedition, gave birth to a son, the first born to him ; and thus, according to the Mohammedan law, became his first wife.

In the sere and yellow of her life, Ismail's mother became a scourge to the community at large.

She had a passion for soldiers, the biggest and most stalwart being her particular choice. On a far more extensive scale she emulated Catharine of Russia ; but she differed from that remarkable personage, by bowstringing her paramours when she wearied of them.

As the best of his troops were rapidly disappearing, Ismail was eventually obliged to confine his amiable parent within her palace ; where, restricted to the melancholy society of the eunuchs, she was constrained to pass the remainder of her life.

A worthy son of such a mother, the many misdeeds of Ismail are too well known to need more than passing mention. When, at length, he was forced into exile by the great powers, his last exploit was the theft of all the bullion in the Egyptian treasury. For days previous to his departure from Cairo camel trains heavily laden with the loot traversed the desert to Suez, where a ship was waiting for its reception, and sailed with it to Europe.

An empty treasury, a population suffering from

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every form of oppression possible to despotic rule, the country wasted and despoiled and in a state of bankruptcy: such was the legacy left by Ismail to the son who succeeded him on the Khedivial throne, and such was the chaotic condition of things out of which emerged, through the financial genius and able administration of Sir Evelyn Baring, the prosperous Egypt of to-day.

Nemesis, however, eventually overtook the ex-Khedge, fate having ordained that the accumulated wealth he had extorted from the wretched Egyptians should be coveted by as unscrupulous a despot as himself. About a year after I met him in London the ex-Khedge purchased a palace in Naples, where he intended to reside with his family during his exile; but he had not been long in the enjoyment of his new surroundings when he received a pressing invitation from Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, who desired the pleasure of seeing his deposed Viceroy of Egypt in Constantinople. For one so cunning and suspicious by nature as Ismail certainly was, the ex-Khedge then took an incomprehensible step; he accepted the invitation and went to Constantinople. Once there, he was imprisoned in a palace by order of the Sultan (being later joined in captivity by his belongings from Naples), all his wealth was confiscated, and he later died with symptoms suggesting poison, a tragic end he had so often decreed to others under somewhat similar circumstances.

His son and successor, Tewfik Pasha, a just and kindly ruler, was taken ill soon after I arrived in Cairo and within a few days died.

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By active and sympathetic collaboration with the Consul-General he had relieved the fellahs of many grievous burdens and helped to restore confidence in the country ; his unexpected death was therefore keenly felt, as much by Sir Evelyn as by the population at large. In the delicate position then occupied by the Consul-General, the attitude likely to be adopted by the new Khedive Abbas II., then a student in Vienna, was of great importance to the furtherance of his policy ; it meant either the free hand he had in a measure so far enjoyed or more formidable obstruction on the part of France.

The fall of Khartoum was a comparatively recent event at that time, and I heard a great deal about General Gordon from those who had known him well.

The picture given of him was very different to the popular conception, which has taken so great a hold on the minds of the British Public. From what I was told there seemed to be little difference in the matter of religious intolerance between General Gordon and a Spanish Inquisitor.

Frequently, it appears, in judging the natives, when undecided how to act, he opened the Bible haphazard ; and if his first glance fell on such a verse as "The Lord slew his enemies," off went the culprit to execution. If, on the other hand, "The Lord spared his enemies," or words to that effect, the man was pardoned.

Such an action being hardly that of a sane man I expressed my disbelief in the story, but was assured it was true, and that many

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of his acts in the Soudan were equally incomprehensible.

He was constantly meddling in the political life of the country, frequently seeing things from a mistaken point of view, and aggressively imposing his opinion on those in authority if they differed from him.

In this respect, I believe, he was a sore trial to both Sir Evelyn and the British Government, especially as he was an impossible person to argue with.

Lord Cromer touches on this in his *Modern Egypt*, but does not insist upon the point. It is not well (for such as desire popularity in England) to see, much less draw attention to any flaw in those whom she delights to honour. He merely says, "General Gordon was too rash and impulsive for the conduct of political affairs in this work-a-day world." One may read between the lines.

Gordon and the Mahdi, in fact, were both religious fanatics, the latter claiming to be the chosen of the Prophet, the former considering himself the elect of Jehovah.

I say Jehovah advisedly, as many of the General's actions in the Soudan were more in harmony with the sanguinary deity of the Old Testament than according to the peaceful teaching of Christ.

I have often wondered if General Gordon would have occupied his high place in the affections of the British Public, had he not so ostentatiously displayed the Bible in one hand whilst exercising the sword in the other.

In my opinion the mixing of religion and

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warsfare produces a nauseating result of cant and hypocrisy ; but apparently the compound is palatable to many persons.

Take for example the reprisals in the Soudan to avenge Gordon's death at Khartoum.

The bloodshed of the Mahdists during their period of power is as nothing compared with the carnage and stream of blood which followed in the wake of the British troops, until the awful slaughter of Omdurman completed the army's task : eleven thousand lying dead upon that field, and sixteen thousand wounded, being left to the mercy of Providence in the burning desert ; whilst the English and Egyptian casualties were less than three hundred and ninety dead and wounded !

The ignoble desecration of the Mahdi's tomb, when the head was decapitated from the dead body and the remains thrown into the Nile, was reprobated throughout the civilised world ; and one is glad to remember, in connection with this senseless and brutal act, that a few enlightened Liberal and Nationalist members in the House of Commons also expressed their horror and indignation in no measured terms.

On the Sunday following the battle of Omdurman a solemn church service was held in Khartoum, and the blessing of God invoked on the good work in hand. The people of England were deeply impressed by this signal mark of the religious fervour animating the troops, exhibiting a moral superiority to other less divinely favoured nations.

Lord Cromer thus alludes in his able book on Egypt to this service :

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“The sturdy and reverend Puritan spirit which still animates Teutonic Christianity, and which makes the soldier, at the moment of action, look to the guidance and protection of a higher power, found expression in a religious service in honour of the illustrious dead.” The illustrious dead does not, of course, mean the Dervishes who died with such heroism for their faith, but General Gordon, to whose “manes” this human sacrifice of 27,000 souls had just been offered.

The whole affair recalls to my mind another occasion when the sturdy Puritan spirit was displayed by Oliver Cromwell; and he (also deeming himself a divinely appointed avenger) put to the sword the women, children, and garrison of Drogheda, and wrote: “We refused them quarter; not thirty escaped. *I wish all honest hearts to give the glory of this to God alone.*”

### IV

Shortly after the young Khedive had taken up the reins of Government, I was presented to His Highness by Sir Evelyn Baring. Abbas II. received us most cordially, and seemed very favourably disposed towards the Consul-General. He was an amiable, fresh-coloured youth, very stout, and then about eighteen years of age. After conversing in French for some time, coffee was served, and soon after we took our leave, Sir Evelyn evidently pleased with the warmth of reception accorded by His Highness.

To understand his satisfaction, it must be explained that the French Minister had already

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commenced to undermine by every means in his power the friendly disposition towards the British Government then arising in the mind of the young Khedive.

I was received several times afterwards by the Khedive, each occasion increasing the regard I felt towards him, and which I had reason to think was reciprocated. It was, therefore, a profound pleasure when Sir Evelyn intimated to me that the Khedive desired me to paint his portrait.

The sittings extended over quite a length of time. His Highness took the greatest interest in the progress of the picture, and showed me every mark of favour; promising to attend my first reception in the new house and studio I was building in Cairo, and which was to be ready for occupation on my return the following winter.

During one of our conversations, whilst posing, His Highness asked my advice on an important matter he had been considering.

“I desire,” he said, “to show my appreciation of the reforms effected in Egypt, and at the same time pay my homage and respect to the Queen of England. Do you think if I were to present the picture you are painting to Her Majesty it would be favourably received?”

Feeling confident that such a step would be a source of satisfaction to Sir Evelyn, demonstrating, as it would, approbation and sympathy with his policy, as well as that of the British Government, I hastened to confirm His Highness in the happy thought he had expressed.

“Such a gift from the youngest to the oldest ruler,” I answered, “could not be otherwise than

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most acceptable : I am sure Her Majesty would be delighted."

"I am glad you think so," he replied ; "if you see Sir Evelyn this afternoon, you might speak to him on the subject, and let me know what his views are to-morrow morning."

We talked over the matter during the sitting. He was seriously preoccupied with the possible attitude of the French Minister, who was sure to resent such a marked expression of preference for the English.

Filled with noble ideals and lofty principles, virtues unknown to his forbears, young Abbas was anxious to reconcile the many conflicting elements surrounding him, and was beginning to realise the difficulties of his position.

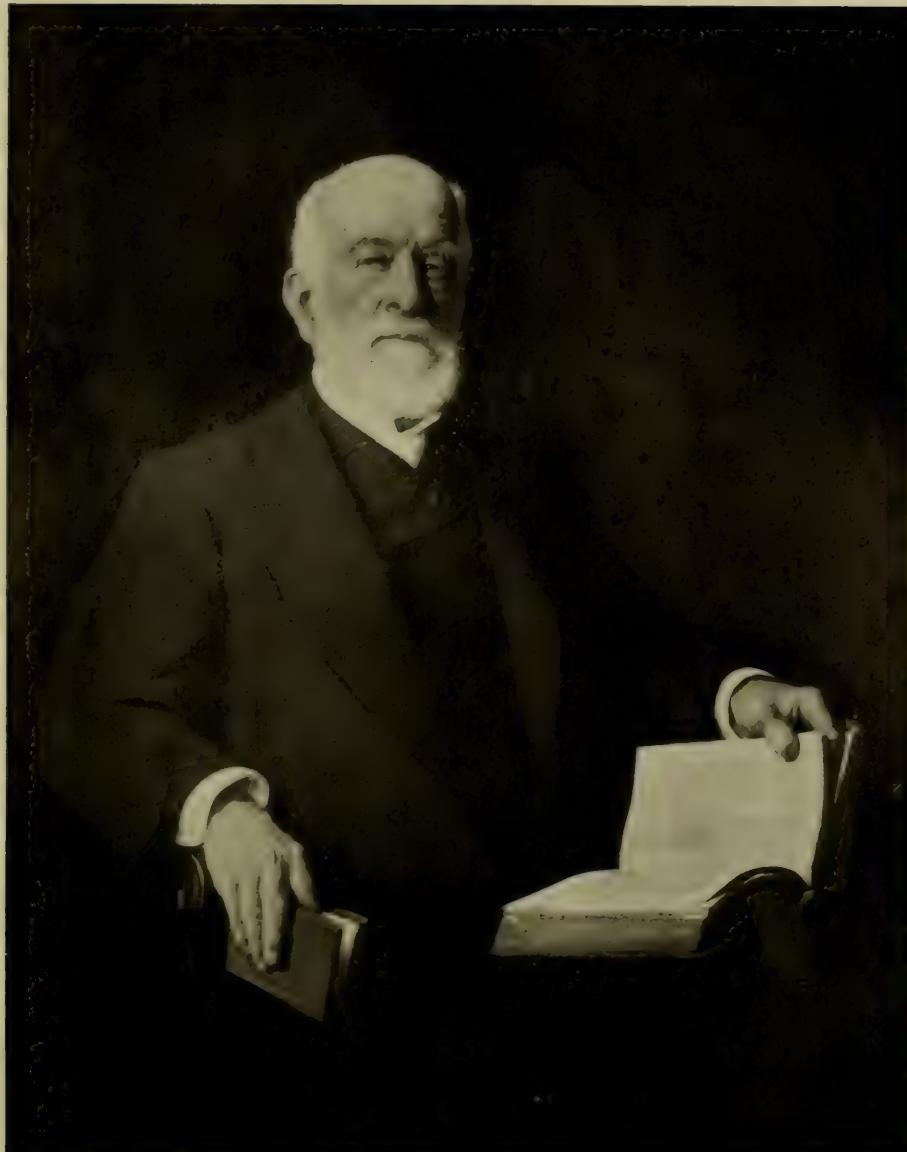
Apart from other worries, with the French Minister pulling on one side and Sir Evelyn on the other, he was between the devil and the deep sea.

There is no doubt that, at the moment I speak of, Sir Evelyn possessed his full confidence and sympathy. The change in feeling which came afterwards was chiefly due to lack of tact at home.

My story, as it proceeds, will explain my reasons for coming to that conclusion.

I saw Sir Evelyn later in the day, and he was more than gratified by my news. The Khedive's proposal harmonised with his projects, and he approved in kindly terms of my co-operation.

Sir Evelyn had an audience with the Khedive next day, and the matter was settled. It was further arranged that I was to have the honour



Painted 1901  
THE REV'D. THE EARL OF BESSBROUGH



## Egypt

of presenting the portrait on His Highness's behalf to Her Majesty, together with an auto-graph letter to the Queen from the Khedive.

His Highness conferred the distinction of "Khedivial Court Painter" upon me; and in that capacity I left Cairo for London, on my first and only official mission. At my last audience with the Khedive, I had been instructed to express, as well as the admiration and respect he felt for Her Majesty, his friendly disposition towards England. In the light of later events, it is well to remember that he was then sincerely inspired by those sentiments.

On my arrival in London in May 1893, I communicated with Sir Henry Ponsonby, Private Secretary to the Queen, requesting him to take Her Majesty's pleasure in the matter of the presentation, which, after some correspondence on the subject, was arranged to take place at Windsor. Sir Henry asked me to send the picture there, very kindly undertaking to see that it was well placed in a good light and kept covered, until I myself unveiled it before the Queen. The day was fixed, and I received a command to lunch at the Castle.

The letter from the Khedive was a large, imposing affair, too big for my pocket. I carried it in my hand until I got into the train, when I placed it by my side on the seat, and forgot it, only discovering the loss after my arrival at Windsor Castle. It may be imagined that I spent a "mauvais quart d'heure" until, confiding my trouble to one of the gentlemen-in-waiting, he, after telephoning to the station, inexpressibly relieved my mind by stating that the missive

## Recollections of a Court Painter

was found, and then on its way to the Castle by special messenger.

After lunch Sir Henry Ponsonby took me to the room where the portrait was placed, and there I awaited the arrival of the Queen.

Sir Henry left me, and in a few minutes returned, ushering in Her Majesty alone. I was not altogether unknown to the Queen, and, as I bowed, she gave me a gracious and very pleasant smile.

Her Majesty was attired in an old-fashioned black gown, and apparently wore a crinoline, or something of the kind. She had a stick in her hand, on which she leant heavily, and appeared to have shrunken a good deal since, six or seven years previously, I first saw her at a garden party.

What struck me with amazement was how very diminutive the Queen was; certainly not seeming to be more than 4 ft. 8 or 9 inches in height.

My height is 5 ft. 11 in., and as I stood beside her, making my little speech, Her Majesty's upturned face was about on a level with the first collar-button of my frock-coat.

The awe, veneration, and profound respect which the Queen inspired in so many of her subjects magnified her personality, and although, as I said before, I had previously seen her, I shared somewhat in the general impression.

It was therefore with the deepest interest that I contemplated Her Majesty in such close vicinity, striving to realise that the greatest power on earth was wielded by the very small lady at my side.

## Egypt

I unveiled the portrait, and handed Her Majesty the Khedive's letter, which she passed on to Sir Henry.

After inspecting the picture, and asking a few questions, the Queen desired me to inform the Khedive that she received his present with much pleasure, and was deeply gratified. Her Majesty then retired, and the audience was over.

I append the official announcement of this audience which appeared in the Court Journal.

"Mr. H. J. Thaddeus, Painter in Ordinary to the Khedive of Egypt, yesterday presented an autograph letter to Her Majesty from the Khedive, together with a portrait in oils of His Highness, painted by Mr. Thaddeus. Her Majesty expressed herself much gratified with this present."

The reverential respect and esteem in which Queen Victoria was held, by the generation now passing away, resembled the blind devotion and abject homage paid to Louis XIV. by the French nobility. I have known gallant colonels whose eyes moistened with sentimental loyalty every night as they proposed "The Queen, God bless her!" and squires in remote districts who positively wept when that toast was drunk.

To them the Queen was almost a deity, and much more the object of their adoration than the God they worshipped in church. Few had ever seen her, and of those the greater part had beheld but a misty form through their tears of emotion.

No other sovereign will ever inspire such feelings again: the democratic spirit of the rising

## Recollections of a Court Painter

generation, not so reverently disposed, having relegated the divine origin of kings, like the mythologies of Greece, to its place in the legendary past.

Everybody acquainted with Oriental life knows that if a present is given, the equivalent or more, according to the means of the recipient, is expected in return. That such a return was anticipated in Cairo in connection with this gift to her Majesty, is evident from the fact that I was empowered to bring back the present from the Queen.

For a month or so after my visit to Windsor I was busy with my own engagements; but towards the end of the season I felt it my duty to write to Sir Henry Ponsonby, informing him that I intended returning to Egypt early in November and should be glad to know if Her Majesty had any further message for His Highness, as, in that case, I was deputed to convey it. I received a reply, stating, that Her Majesty had already personally conveyed her appreciation of the gift to me, and that there was nothing further to add.

I wrote again to Sir Henry, and pointed out that, in the condition of affairs then prevailing in Egypt, it was desirable, from every point of view, to preserve the friendly sentiments of the Khedive and that such a barren message would not conduce to this end.

He replied that he quite understood this, but that Her Majesty had made it a rule not to give presents to Indian potentates, and would not depart from it.

## Egypt

I was astonished !

The Khedive was *not* an Indian potentate ; the custom therefore had no bearing on his case ; and he was besides a very important person for us to keep on good terms with.

I next applied to Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Secretary, and put the situation clearly before him. He regretted it was not within his official cognisance. It was the private business of the Queen, to be arranged as she thought fit.

However, I did not yet despair ; and later, whilst staying with Sir Algernon and Lady Borthwick at Invercauld, near Balmoral, Princess Beatrice was approached on the subject.

The result of her intervention was the same : the Queen would not depart from the rule she had laid down.

Not even an Indian shawl was I to carry back !

Had I been a Frenchman, and taken such a message and portrait from the Khedive to the President of the Republic, I should probably have returned to Cairo with a frigate-full of presents likely to gratify a young ruler of eighteen whose goodwill was desirable, and who had so charmingly proffered his friendship.

The powers that be in England have had so far a happy knack of bungling through somehow ; but it never seems to strike those in authority that a tactful and gracious act may, at a minimum of cost, often serve the same purpose as an expensive military expedition.

I knew perfectly well the effect that would be produced by my return empty-handed. To the Oriental mind it meant one thing only, a deliberate slight, an insult even.

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The Khedive's graceful action had already brought a hornet's nest about his ears, all the nations opposed to England uniting in their resentment. Consequently he would be all the more sensitive on the subject.

I returned to Cairo in November, and for a short time was busy furnishing and arranging my new house and studio. Meanwhile I applied for an audience with the Khedive, which after a short delay was accorded.

I went to the Abdeen palace on the day appointed, and was met by Mazloum Pasha, then in attendance on His Highness. After a friendly exchange of courtesies, he informed me that the Khedive would receive me in a moment.

He then asked the question uppermost in his mind.

“What presents have you brought His Highness from the Queen of England?”

“I am the bearer of Her Majesty's thanks.”

“Is that all?”

“That is all.”

He was silent for a moment, lost in thought.

“If you will excuse me, I think I had better convey your message to His Highness; he will, however, see you presently.”

He left me, and I waited patiently for nearly half-an-hour before the Khedive appeared. He seemed to have become more serious and reserved, but otherwise was as cordial and kind as ever. We talked of Paris and London, the opera, theatres, &c., in short, the usual conversation “pour passer le temps.”

As he did not ask me a single question regard-

## Egypt

ing my mission, or mention the Queen, I did not touch on the subject, but I drew my own conclusions.

He was particularly kind to me as I took my leave ; and I little knew, as he shook my hand, that I was to be the last Britisher at that time with whom he parted in such a friendly manner.

My house was now ready for the festive evening I proposed giving, and I only awaited the Khedive's wishes as to the date. However, to my great disappointment, a message was conveyed to me that His Highness was obliged by unforeseen circumstances to reconsider his promise, and that he could not attend the reception in my house.

At the same time he wished me to understand that his friendship towards me had not altered in the least.

I quite grasped the situation.

Soon after there were rumours that he was at loggerheads with the Consul-General, and matters later became very serious indeed ; alarming the British Government, and bringing Sir Evelyn into action with the "big stick" and reinforcement of troops.

## CORSICA—HOMBURG

**I**N March 1895 I went to Corsica, home of the vendetta, and the stage on which Boswell, the biographer of Doctor Johnson, strutted about, in fantastic costume, acting a ridiculous part with his usual pomposity. The mistral was blowing with hurricane force as the little steamer neared the seaport of Bastia, lashing the sea with such fury that it seemed as if frenzied demons of the air, hissing and whistling, were lacerating its agitated surface, causing it to shriek with agony. Fearing to approach the dock in such a gale, the captain anchored in the offing, when a few venturesome passengers landed in a boat, the majority remaining on board until the storm abated. As we hurried along the deserted quay to the hotel some distance off, the wind rushed tempestuously down the by-streets, making every crossing a thing to be dreaded. A large dray, filled with casks of wine and drawn by two horses, advanced before us, and we sought its shelter as it passed one of these by-streets. A sudden gust of unusual violence struck the dray full broadside and in a second both horses and vehicle were upset and the casks of wine were rolling across the quay towards the sea, their speed accelerated by the howling wind behind. This may seem an incredible statement to any one not familiar with the "mistral," and, as a matter

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of fact, one has to live at Avignon or Tarascon to realise its power; but although I have lived in both places, I did not fully appreciate the driving capacity of the mistral until that day in Bastia. It was a miracle we were not crushed by the falling barrels.

The train from Bastia passes through Corte on its way to Ajaccio. Corte was the seat of parliament in good King George's time, when Corsica was a British possession, and it was there that Boswell masqueraded in the train of Paoli the patriot, then dreaming of a Corsican Republic. Corte was in the throes of an election contest when I visited the town. The proceedings of the previous night had included a shooting match between the candidates, and there was much excitement in the streets, for it had ended fatally and a new blood feud had arisen. I wandered through the crowds and got into conversation with a friendly native, who very kindly volunteered to show me what little there was to be seen. He spoke a kind of mongrel Italian (the Corsicans never speak French amongst themselves), and we got on very well together. As we approached the ruins of the Franciscan monastery where the parliament formerly sat, I noticed an elderly man, with a gun slung over his shoulders, leaning, in a listless attitude, at the corner of the street. I was about to draw my guide's attention to him when he saluted the stranger gravely and we passed on.

"That is an old vendetta," he said. "For twenty years that man has waited for his enemy, always in the same place."

"But why in the same place?" I asked.

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“Because around the corner on the top floor of the house opposite lives the man he is waiting to shoot. He must be careful when he peeps around, as the other has a gun also at the window.”

“And has the other man remained in the house all these years?” I inquired.

“Yes, he is afraid to stir out. A girl brings him food and water; no one else dares to approach the door.”

The best known family in Ajaccio is that of Pozzo di Borgo. The first duke of the name was the Pozzo di Borgo who, when in power as Minister in Russia, advocated the burning of Moscow, thereby checkmating and ruining Napoleon, against whom he had from early youth vowed a vendetta. This vendetta was due to the following incident, which is an illustration of the trivial causes from which sometimes great events spring.

The modest households of Bonaparte and Pozzo di Borgo, frugally managed on slender means, only rarely indulged in appetising joints with succulent gravy, and on one such occasion the two boys, Napoleon Bonaparte and Pozzo di Borgo, were sitting side by side at the table. During the meal Napoleon surreptitiously abstracted some of his neighbour's gravy, which action when discovered led to a violent scene between the youths. Out of this childish quarrel arose the enmity, later intensified by jealousy of Bonaparte's success, which governed Pozzo di Borgo's actions in after life, when Napoleon, singularly free from the vindictiveness peculiar to his race, had forgotten all about the occurrence

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and only desired the friendship of his compatriot.

His great-grandson, Count Charles Pozzo di Borgo, who was at Ajaccio during my visit, commissioned me to paint a portrait of the Countess, a most attractive woman, and of his son and heir. These were to be hung in his château on the heights overlooking Ajaccio, where he had a fine collection of pictures, priceless Sèvres, and many other gifts of the Czar to his ancestor.

A unique interest attached to this château, for it had been constructed with some of the stones of the Tuileries, the Pozzo di Borgos having purchased the Pavilion, left intact after the Commune, from the French Government, and transported it to the hamlet whence the family took its name. Thus, in the irony of fate, the downfall of Napoleon's dynasty was associated with the building of their splendid residence by the descendants of his relentless foe.

Count Pozzo di Borgo possessed a small villa near Ajaccio, surrounded by lovely old gardens, and situated near a delicious little cove, where a few fishermen lived. Here I spent many happy hours sketching, and we became great friends, the fishermen and I. When after a good catch the pot of *bouillabaisse* was cooked amongst the rocks (cooked as only the old "Patron" knew how to cook it), I was always invited to share the appetising meal, pleasantly enlivened as it was by the younger men, who afterwards sang and played the guitar; my contribution to the feast being wine and coffee from the cabaret near by. Not far from this cove was also the practising ground of the French artillery stationed

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at Ajaccio. I fraternised with the soldiers, infantry and artillerymen, many of whom were highly educated men, and they loved to sit around me as I sketched, competing amongst themselves as to who should have the privilege of posing. I was struck by the spirit of insubordination which animated them: of hatred towards their officers—notably in the infantry—general dislike of the service, and entire lack of patriotism. If as a unit they represented in any degree the spirit prevailing in the whole French Army, Germany in my opinion has no need for further preoccupation regarding her neighbour.

The officers of the different regiments messed at the hotel where I was staying, not, as with English regiments stationed abroad, all united at one table, but the infantry at one end of the dining-room, the artillery at the other. Most agreeable and accomplished, the colonel commanding the artillery, with whom I spent much of my time in Ajaccio, felt bitterly his isolation in Corsica (the Corsicans are not a captivating race, besides which there is no love lost between them and the French), and as he regarded the infantry officers with marked coldness and hauteur, a feeling shared by his mess, there was no other company for him but that of his own subordinates. No salutations passed between the members of the two mess tables, no friendly intercourse, such as exists between English and between German officers under similar circumstances; whilst jealousy and reserve distinguished the performance of such duties as they had to share. The infantry officers apparently visited on their men the resentment caused by their

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sense of humiliation, and the unfortunates were literally drilled, marched, and countermarched to death. Sore feet, lameness or illness, brought no relief from arduous duties, resulting in four unnecessary deaths during my stay. I was not surprised when one day conversing with the captain directly responsible for these casualties (in callousness he was perhaps exceeded by the regimental doctor), he alluded to his men as treacherous *canaille*, adding, that in the event of his regiment being called into action the bullets both he and his brother officers feared would not be those of the enemy.

## HOMBURG

On my return to London I was kept busily employed until July, when, troubled by a gouty affection, I resolved upon taking a "Kur," and early in the month went to Homburg for that purpose, being so charmed with the pleasant little town and its lovely surroundings, that I continued faithful to it during many seasons. Fresh as a memory of yesterday remains to me the recollection of those fragrant summer mornings! How delicious they were, bathed in sunshine. As the pure air filled your lungs, its crisp invigorating quality gave a sense of exhilaration and supreme *bien-être*, whilst through exquisite gardens, sweet with the perfume of dew-laden roses, you made your way to the springs.

From seven to nine an excellent orchestra discoursed the best of music, alleviating the penance of drinking the waters and distracting

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the listeners' thoughts from any ailments they may have possessed ; though the well-dressed pleasant crowd, gaily exchanging morning salutations, was apparently free from all pre-occupation on the subject of bodily ills.

During the months of July and August, Homburg in the 'nineties had certainly no rival amongst the pleasure-resorts of Europe. July was the month of roses, then in their perfection of bloom ; August was the period of the social butterflies, who arrived in swarms on pleasure bent. Personally, I preferred the quieter days of July when my fragrant rose-friends, later sacrificed in myriads on the altar of fashion, blossomed in rich profusion in the beautifully kept pleasure-grounds, whence alluring little paths lead up to the balmy shade of the Tannenwälder.

Endless are the walks through these, and over the green Taunus Hills ; a favourite excursion of mine being to the Saalburg or Roman Camp. I generally started on foot before lunch, partaking of that meal on the terrace of a "Restauration" situated near the camp, and spent the afternoon wandering amongst the ruins, conjuring up visions of the past. Roman history has always had a singular attraction for me, and I loved to rebuild in fancy the edifices in the Saalburg of which only the foundations remained. When the Emperor William, with that artistic feeling and generosity which distinguish His Majesty, decided to restore the Saalburg at his own expense no one rejoiced at the news more than I did. He has accomplished this great work with loving care and personal supervision, and now it is the only perfect example of a Roman camp, in its entirety,

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that the world possesses ; a monument alike to the genius of the race which created it, and to the Emperor's munificence. I happened to be at the Saalburg whilst the great wells there were cleaned out. A large variety of objects and every description of utensil were found in their depths, together with a collection of sandals of all sizes and degree. Evidently in former days these wells were favourite receptacles for the worn-out footwear of the citizens, who were apparently not fastidious about the quality of the water they drank.

Although I had come to Homburg with the intention of remaining only the three weeks necessary for the cure, I found my stay so agreeable that I prolonged it until September ended the season. I took some rooms, one of which could be utilised as a studio, and that year, as well as succeeding years, painted a number of portraits there.

Amongst the habitués of Homburg were most of the well-known men and women in England, and many foreign notables, though the latter as a rule prefer Ostend, Baden, or Aix-les-Bains, as being gayer, enlivened by an element which is non-existent at Homburg.

The Duke of Cambridge, accompanied by his two sons, Colonel Augustus FitzGeorge and Admiral FitzGeorge, arrived in July to go through the "Kur," and during my first visit to Homburg he gave me sittings for his portrait.

He generally came to my rooms after lunch, and, like the ordinary run of mankind, being drowsy after a good meal, he invariably slept a peaceful sleep after posing for a short time.

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Where he differed from other mortals was in his ability to rouse himself now and then during his slumbers for a few moments, and take up a discussion just where he had left it ; discoursing logically and clearly as though, instead of sleeping, he had merely closed his eyes to better consider some important point.

The power of indulging in such semi-conscious sleep must be a precious gift to any one condemned to long and dreary dinner parties. I have seen persons so endowed, rigid in their chairs, conforming to all outward signs of decorum, and apparently listening with rapt attention to an impassioned after-dinner speaker, but in reality fast asleep.

In 1898 the Duke was still Commander-in-chief of the British Army ; and, if I remember rightly, it was during the summer of that year, and at Homburg, that he received the unexpected intelligence of his removal from the post by the Conservative Government then in office.

If such a step had been taken by the Liberal party it is possible that H.R.H. might not have felt the blow so keenly as he did. Mr. Gladstone to his eyes was the incarnation of evil, and in this regard he shared the common view of the royal family. Removal by that statesman or his Government would therefore only mean an additional act of villainy, but coming as it did from the party he admired and supported, the shock was a cruel one ; he never really recovered from its effect, and severed so abruptly from his lifelong associations, his health soon gave way.

The last time I saw H.R.H. was just previous to my departure for New York, with my portrait

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of Pope Pius X. I lunched with the Duke on that occasion, and noticed with solicitude how very feeble he had become ; altogether he had changed so much for the worse that I was not surprised to hear of his death soon afterwards.

He was much interested in the new Pontiff, the portrait of whom I had previously sent for H.R.H.'s inspection to his residence, Gloucester House.

The Duke formed the centre of a coterie of old Crimean friends, which included Sir George Wombwell and Sir William Russell, the veteran war correspondent.

Sir George was, I believe, the last surviving officer of that cavalry regiment whose exploit at Balaclava is immortalised in "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

I once asked him if he knew who was responsible for the order which brought about the act of madness the charge undoubtedly was. He said he really could not tell ; an ensign at the time, he did not trouble whether the order was a mistake or not, only too glad was he to return uninjured, with the few survivors left of the regiment. The commanding officer was killed, and with him died the secret of the blunder.

Sir George was getting on towards seventy when I met him ; but he was remarkably well-preserved, and in the twilight might be mistaken for a young man. A neat figure, always immaculately attired, hat cocked at a slight angle, and jaunty air, he was the beau ideal of an elderly gallant.

The ravages of time only showed on his face, which was puckered with innumerable wrinkles, whilst he had a curious manner of blinking the eyes as he spoke. However, in the light that became

## Recollections of a Court Painter

him, he could pass muster with a young blood ; and, what is more, the spark of youthful vigour still glimmered in his breast.

His discerning gaze could appreciate, perhaps more keenly than at twenty-five, the arch of a pretty foot or the straying glance of a bewitching eye. In a lighter field the veteran again charged impregnable fortresses, accepting defeat with unruffled philosophy. He was the most amiable of mankind, always ready to do any and everybody a good turn.

I introduced a very pretty woman to him at Homburg in 1899, and he immediately capitulated to charms which had previously conquered myself. I had only quite recently made the fair lady's acquaintance, and the little story I am going to tell in connection with that accidental meeting is a tribute to her ingenuity and cleverness in the art of climbing into society.

When I arrived in Homburg I noticed at the springs a lady generally walking alone, sometimes accompanied by a small child. Her attractive figure and sparkling eyes riveted my attention, but as no one seemed to know her—certainly none of my friends—perforce I had to find an occasion for myself to speak to the charming incognita.

The occasion arose, and I discovered that my new friend hailed from New York. Her husband was with her at Homburg, but he was of a retiring disposition and kept in the background.

As they knew no one she did not find the sojourn agreeable. Such in short was the tale unfolded as we sauntered along.

I later met her husband (a very rough diamond, indeed), who had transformed his original name

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into that of a well-known family in New York, which it somewhat resembled. It is unnecessary to say that no change of name could alter the ancestral character of his features. He had amassed considerable wealth in America, and was thinking of settling near Frankfort, the birth-place of his parents.

The fair lady easily prevailed on me to introduce her to several of my titled friends (she seemed to have quite a passion for titles), and then, mounting higher, confided to me that the one ambition of her life was to obtain the honour of being presented to the Duke of Cambridge.

Not being sufficiently intimate with H.R.H. to present her myself, it occurred to me that Sir George Wombwell, with his usual good-nature, would be the very person to do so; accordingly, as I have mentioned, I made him acquainted with my fair friend, and from that moment I noticed that the seductive smiles previously reserved for my benefit were now exclusively employed on Sir George.

It was arranged for the following morning that Sir George, meeting the Siren at the springs and accompanying her in her walk, should, as it were by the merest accident, present her to the Duke.

Everything happened to perfection.

H.R.H. said some gracious things which enchanted the lady. With a promptness which startled Sir George and the Duke himself, on the spot she proposed a dinner-party.

The Duke, naturally helpless in the toils of a pretty woman, acquiesced. The next thing was to collect all the titles I had presented her to, every one of whom was invited to the dinner.

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None of them knew the husband, but that was a trifle of no importance.

There was a glowing account of the dinner-party in the *New York Herald*, with a list of all the titled guests present to meet H.R.H., together with a note referring to the remarkable social success of the hostess. I felt a little aggrieved that I was not also invited to the dinner; but, alas! I wore no coronet, and that was my undoing. Having served the purpose in her interests, for which Providence had designed me, I considered that my dismissal might have been performed in a slightly more delicate manner. I was then innocent of the ways of "climbers," as ladies with social aspirations and pushing dispositions are called in America, and have since learnt that delicacy of feeling is not usually part of their stock-in-trade.

Like a wise woman, Mrs. L—— later followed up her advantage and Sir George to London, where the genial baronet was kept busy presenting her to his different friends. When last I heard of him he was still engaged in that arduous, but no doubt pleasing occupation.

As a rule the Royalties taking the waters at Homburg so timed their visits as not to diminish each other's glory. The Duke of Cambridge shed the lustre of his presence in July, succeeded in August by the greater brilliancy of the Prince of Wales, who, in turn, was eclipsed by the Imperial light of the Emperor. The latter invariably arrived at Homburg for the great summer manœuvres towards the end of August. The Prince of Wales, however, seemed to have little desire to meet his nephew, and arranged his departure so as to avoid such a contingency.

## Homburg

The estrangement between uncle and nephew was then common knowledge, and generally deplored. The source of this ill-feeling can only be conjectured ; but the following incident related to me suggests one of the possible reasons for the adverse feeling exhibited later by the Emperor towards his English relatives.

His imperial mother, the Crown Princess, it seems had a pronounced predilection for British as opposed to Prussian ideals. Furthermore, she did not apparently understand or appreciate the nature or character of her eldest son, then about eighteen years of age ; who, misunderstood, was not happy in his home surroundings. It was at this period that an august relative paid a visit to the Crown Princess, and as the royal ladies were taking tea together, young Prince William entered to pay his respects to his English relation. His Imperial Highness was in civil dress, wearing a frock-coat. Frock-coats in Germany at that period were not so well cut as they are to-day, and certainly did not conform to British ideas of smartness. As Prince William smilingly saluted his cousin and kissed her hand, the Crown Princess regarded her son's attire with grave disapproval.

"No English gentleman," she said in terms of displeasure, "would dream of entering a drawing-room in such a badly cut coat as you are wearing."

Deeply mortified by such a reproach, the young prince drew himself up.

"I wish, Madame, you would remember that I am not English," he replied. "I am, and only desire to be, a Prussian gentleman." He then bowed and left the room.

Later when Prince William's attachment to

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Prince Bismarck (for whom the Crown Princess entertained a profound dislike) became pronounced, his association with the Iron Chancellor did not conduce to a better feeling between mother and son. It is only reasonable to suppose that the views of Her Imperial Highness on the subject would be accepted by her near relations in England, and under the circumstances it is hardly likely that these views were favourable to the young prince.

My painter friend, Professor Corrodi (whom I had not seen for some years), was established at Homburg in a great apartment at the Kursaal, formerly occupied in the old gambling days by M. Blanc, Homburg then being the Monte Carlo of Europe.

The Crown Princess (late Empress Frederick), who had a great regard for Corrodi, procured this privilege for her friend from the municipality. In these spacious, lavishly decorated rooms, he had a very fine collection of his pictures on exhibition, mute spectators of many a pleasant reunion in their midst. Corrodi, Swiss by birth, was an able painter and also a remarkable linguist. Then about sixty years of age, with white hair and beard, kindly sympathetic manner and courtly air, he remains in my memory the most interesting and attractive figure in Homburg. He had known everybody worth knowing; and, with his keen sense of humour, was the most delightful story-teller I ever listened to. His headquarters were in Rome, where he had a beautiful studio, in which I passed many pleasant hours in 1897.

## Homburg

The Empress Frederick in the later years of her life lived at Cronburg, near Homburg, and Corrodi was a frequent guest in her villa. Her Majesty was in bad health and wasting away, but the nature of her malady was not disclosed. After her death, however, Corrodi informed me that the Empress had died of cancer of the liver, and in great agony. This statement recalled to my mind the bitter controversy between Doctor Morel Mackenzie and the German doctors over the nature of the throat affection from which her husband, the late Emperor Frederick, then Crown Prince, was suffering. Morel Mackenzie, at that time the greatest London expert on diseases of the throat, was called to San Remo to attend the Crown Prince, and report on the character of the malady, a cancerous growth according to the diagnosis of the German doctors. By the Prussian law such a disease would debar the Crown Prince from ascending the throne on his father's death.

Unwilling to accept the conclusion of the German doctors, the Crown Princess sent for Morel Mackenzie who, after performing an operation, pronounced the growth in the throat non-cancerous. On receipt of this news the press of Germany raised a fierce outcry, which was responded to with equal vehemence by the press of England. Prince Bismarck, whose sentiments were far from friendly towards the Crown Princess, sustained, through his particular organ, the attack on the English doctor, whose diagnosis was treated with contumely.

It was openly stated in the German press that the Crown Princess was only anxious to secure

## Recollections of a Court Painter

her allowance as Dowager Empress, and had suborned Morel Mackenzie to forward her interests. Public opinion was most indignant in England at what it considered an unfounded attack on the honour of an English princess ; and the press exhausted itself in terms of vituperation. It was then that the German press was alluded to as being of a “reptile” order. Whilst the actual nature of the disease was as yet unsettled, and the wordy battle still raging furiously, the aged Emperor died, and the Crown Prince ascended the throne as Frederick II.

When this event took place, Morel Mackenzie received the honour of knighthood. It was rumoured that he was also the recipient of the largest fee ever paid for medical attendance. The Emperor only lived a very short time after his accession, and it was then conclusively proved that the disease he died of *was* cancer.

At the time of my first visit to Homburg, the seasons were divided into two periods, the German and the English ; the former taking the waters during May and June, the latter monopolising the months of July and August. During the first period the prices of rooms, &c., were most moderate, to be increased considerably for the benefit of the wealthier English, who frequently referred to the earlier visitors as “those German paupers.”

The German nation had not yet commenced to reap the profits of the vast industrial enterprises which absorbed most of its capital as well as its loans from France. The unexpected calling in of those loans by the French with the



MRS. PHILIP LYDIG, NEW YORK

*Painted*



## Homburg

sinister object of arresting the commercial progress of the country, led to the temporary suspension of several banks in Germany, and created a situation which gave much inward satisfaction to her commercial rivals. However, the crisis was tided over, and with renewed vigour and confidence the Germans forged ahead, building innumerable factories and businesses, until to-day the banks of the Rhine are crowded with immense constructions. Season by season at Homburg I noticed a gradual encroachment on the English period by a new and wealthy section of German society, hitherto unknown, who entertained liberally and occupied the most expensive suites in the hotels. It was amusing to note the effect produced by their advent on the English visitors, who really considered Homburg during July and August as their own privileged possession, and regarded this German intrusion (into their own city, if you please!) at such a time as an intolerable piece of impertinence. As the new visitors increased in numbers this resentment took a very offensive turn, and allusions to the "insolence of those beggarly Germans" were loudly expressed at table regardless of the waiters, who all spoke English, or the feeling of Teutons possibly dining in the vicinity. At the golf links, the cherished preserve of the British coterie, the appearance of a nude Hottentot with clubs and balls to play the game could not have outraged the feelings of that select body more entirely than the intrusion of Germans into so sacred a circle.

As the invasion kept increasing (the Germans taking kindly to golf) feeling ran very high

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indeed, and one would suppose from the things said that the Germans had no business in their own country, and still less right to play on links paid for and supported by their own countrymen for the pleasure of all visitors. These feelings at last found a natural vent in letters to the *Times*, from one of which I quote a passage which speaks for itself, and shows I do not exaggerate the attitude of the English.

“. . . No sustainable objection can of course be made to Germans visiting a watering-place in their own country, but this town (Homburg) has been so essentially English for so long a time, that the presence of foreigners is felt to be almost an intrusion. I do not defend our fastidious exclusiveness which makes us detested in almost every country in Europe, but merely note a fact. The English are a warm-hearted race, but this insular dread of foreigners colliding unpleasantly with our habits and prejudices causes us to be everywhere misunderstood.”

Since then the Germans have come into their own and practically replaced the British element in Homburg ; such of the latter as still seek the waters in that charming spot being remarkable for a more chastened manner than that which distinguished their predecessors. It remains to be seen what all this stupid belittling and insulting of Germany will lead to ? The Germans have long memories, and a well-considered relentless policy ; the day will surely come when the one will influence the other, and the moment being ripe, humble pie will be eaten by one party or the other, “qui vivra, verra.”

I remember painting the portrait of a North

## Homburg

Country Englishman as remarkable for his fine physique as for his intelligence and charm of manner. He was, however, filled with this foolish prejudice against Germany and the Germans, whom he disdainfully dismissed "as a nation of waiters." He was partner in one of the great shipbuilding firms in the north, and on one occasion I went over the works with him. As we passed through the yards I asked him if the Company possessed the new machinery then being introduced into the German and American shops. "No," he replied, "and we have no intention of introducing them. We are quite satisfied with those we have been using for the past twenty years; German shipbuilding counts for nothing, and America can never compete with us. We have all the work we can do for the next ten years, and it would be madness to expend £500,000 on new and unnecessary machinery."

This conversation took place fourteen years ago.

Since then America and Germany have achieved remarkable results in shipbuilding; but I often wonder if the great firm in which my very conservative friend was interested is still moving on the same antiquated lines.

## NAPLES—ROME

**I**N the early spring of 1896 I met with a serious accident, breaking my right leg in three places, one fracture being of so serious a description that, fearing gangrene, the surgeon strongly favoured amputation of the entire limb. I did not desire to have, in the form of a cork leg, a constant reminder of my native city, so the operation was not performed ; and in due course I entirely recovered.

When convalescent I went to Italy, sailing for Naples in September 1896, and this visit brings me to the period of my second portrait of Pope Leo XIII.

I remained some weeks in Naples before continuing my journey to Rome. I revisited Pompeii and Herculaneum, spending much time in the museum at Naples with my friend Mr. Rolfe, the English Consul.

Rolfe was familiar with every phase of Neapolitan life, and had quite an exceptional knowledge of local antiquities. I was much interested at seeing in the museum a coil of iron wire rope with a copper wire running through the centre, which had been recently found in Pompeii. What particular use it served was unknown, but it seemed as well made as the modern production which brought its inventor so large a fortune.

Perhaps the most remarkable discovery made

## Naples

at Pompeii since my previous visit was that of a surgeon's house, with all his instruments and bottles of medicines in perfect condition ; these having lain, neatly arranged and undisturbed, since the fatal night of the eruption, A.D. 79.

This collection of surgical instruments is both varied and remarkable, and few surgeons of fifty years ago possessed so complete a set.

In the days of the Emperor Titus, Pompeii was only a small provincial town, a third-class maritime port.

If, therefore, the local practitioner was so amply provided, how richly furnished must have been the great doctors and surgeons of Imperial Rome !

Yet many medical men have assured me that the practice of medicine in Roman times was merely a form of charlatanism, consisting of magic incantations with the administering of simple herbal remedies. The fact is, however, that the medical profession was then a close and secret corporation, jealously guarding an esoteric science (the traditions of the Egyptians, from whom the Greeks and Romans derived their learning, being continued to comparatively recent times). This accounts for much that is otherwise inexplicable in such medical works as have come down to us from antiquity. They were not intended to enlighten the profane outsider, but to mystify him.

The young doctor of Nero's time, for instance, had to learn everything by heart, his instruction being imparted by word of mouth and practical demonstration. The power of memory, so essential to this mode of study, whilst still existing

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in the East, is rapidly disappearing in Europe, books of reference supplying the deficiency.

It does not, however, necessarily follow that because the young Roman received his oral instruction under a vow of secrecy he was in any way inferior to the modern "sawbones," who has a multitude of books to study from, the contents of which he speedily forgets.

A distinguished surgeon in Napoleon the First's time invented an instrument so invaluable in operating for certain diseases of women, that it attracted universal attention in the medical world, whilst the Emperor conferred the title of Baron upon him.

In the collection discovered at Pompeii there were several instruments intended for the same purpose, but far superior to that whose inventor was so signally honoured by Napoleon.

Another portion of the museum contains an interesting collection of portraits, painted in distemper, which disperses the illusion that the ancient Greeks were fashioned in beauty of form and feature more or less according to the masterpieces of their great sculptors.

These were portraits found in Pompeii and in Herculaneum, and must have represented persons of some means; nevertheless the prevailing type is the low degraded one, to be remarked to-day in the streets of Naples and frequently amongst modern Greeks. In Naples are largely represented the descendants of Neapolis, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Greek colonies, to which had drifted, moreover, the scum of the Levantine Ports. This ancestry may account for the modern Neapolitan, who in morals and physique

## Naples

is perhaps the nearest approach to the monkey existing to-day in the human family. His fetish worship of saints and relics belongs more to the darkest of dark ages than to the nineteenth century.

I was present once at the feast of St. Januarius, the patron saint of Naples, when the yearly farce of the liquefaction of his blood was performed in the Cathedral.

The seething mass of garlic-scented humanity in which I found myself was wild with fury because the miracle was not happening to its satisfaction, and hurled the most frightful and blasphemous oaths at the saint. Neapolitan patois is singularly rich in that respect, and St. Januarius had all its wealth showered upon him.

Later, when the trick was accomplished, with equal fervour the people cried for joy, bestowing every endearing epithet on the saint, expressing their gratitude for the mercy shown, in abject and extravagant terms.

During the French occupation of Naples it was solemnly announced by the priestly body that the blood of St. Januarius would not melt whilst the French troops remained in possession.

This announcement succeeded in its object.

The Neapolitans became infuriated against the French; and the assassination of such foreign soldiers as they could surprise alone, or in small bodies, was a daily occurrence. As it was necessary to calm the public mind without further delay, the general in command determined to put a stop to the machinations of the priests. He intimated, therefore, that if the blood did not

## Recollections of a Court Painter

liquefy on a certain day, he would take measures to bring the saint to his senses.

In answer, the general was denounced by the ecclesiastics as an enemy of God and of the saint; and defied to do his worst, since no earthly power could affect the holy blood.

On the appointed day the general ordered the artillery to take up a position on the square facing the Cathedral. An angry, excited population thronged the church and the neighbouring streets; at any moment a general rising might be feared.

The priests had watched the military preparations with troubled eyes, and were in consultation, when an aide-de-camp arrived with the message, that if the miracle did not happen punctually at twelve o'clock they and the Cathedral would be blown to smithereens.

It was then a quarter to twelve!

Watch in hand the general waited; and as the time drew near he ordered that those who did not want to be killed should leave the Cathedral at once.

Then a remarkable thing happened.

To the joy and delight of the populace, *the blood began to liquefy*, and as the clock struck twelve the miracle had taken place.

I went directly from Naples to Rome, where after an absence of eleven years I now once again had the honour of being received by the Pope. His Holiness seemed little altered; perhaps more frail and less active, but otherwise appeared as energetic and alert as before.

I had witnessed the imposing ceremony of the

## Rome

Obbedienza, or Swearing of Allegiance by the cardinals, and had been impressed by its possibilities from the pictorial point of view. When, therefore, Prince Colonna suggested that I should paint another portrait of the Pope, and offered to arrange the matter in case I entertained the idea, I decided to make my studies of His Holiness with a view to a larger composition representing the Obbedienza.

My first portrait of Leo XIII. represents him in his study, pen in hand, before the little *tavolino*, whereon stand the crucifix of ebony and ivory, the inkstand, the ever necessary snuff-box, and the innumerable small slips of paper on which His Holiness preferred to write. His array is of simple white wool; his sole ornaments the gold pectoral cross and the papal ring.

I now desired to portray His Holiness as Sovereign Pontiff, sitting in state, whilst cardinals bend the knee before him.

The scene is one to tempt a painter's brush; it takes place in the Sala Regia (once the Ambassador's audience chamber), whose walls, hung with tapestries and adorned with frescoes, form a rich, yet subdued background for the red and gold of the papal throne; against which stand out, stiff with embroideries of silver and gold, the splendid robes of the Pope and his immense white mitre, glittering with jewels; the crimson draperies of the kneeling cardinals, the handsome uniforms of the Papal guard, and picturesque court dress of the high officials adding interest to the picture.

To represent faithfully this material magnificence, yet keep it subservient to the central figure, whose calm, intellectual face dominates it,

## Recollections of a Court Painter

was my desire ; the task was not an easy one. I was therefore especially pleased when the late Cardinal Vaughan warmly congratulated me on having attained precisely this result.

When I had finished my studies of Leo XIII., for which every facility was given me, the Vatican wardrobe was placed at my disposition with the robe necessary for the picture, a beautiful vestment made by the ladies of France. Of cloth of silver, it was a wonderful specimen of needlecraft, its intrinsic value being £10,000. Its weight was enormous, and it must have been a heavy burden to support, during a long ceremony. The Monsignor who wore it for me whilst I made my studies was nearly exhausted after each pose ; but the honour of wearing the garment more than recompensed him for the fatigue, and when I suggested that "coming events cast their shadows before," a gratified smile replaced the weary expression on his face, whilst his eyes looked wistfully into the future.

In the foreground of my picture stands a figure in helmet and martial array. This is Count Pecci, captain of the "Guardia Nobile," or Noble Guard, who, being the Pope's nephew, occupied a position at the Vatican of some importance, particularly in his own opinion.

He was short, fat, and very pompous in manner, constantly alluding to "Mon oncle, le Saint Père." Yet after all it is something to be nephew to a Pope ; and who can blame Count Pecci for emphasizing the fact of his relationship in case you should forget it. It was regrettable that the Pope could not bequeath him the Vatican, but for the moment he seemed to overlook the



GENERAL ROE, NEW YORK, 1904



## Rome

impossibility, and to regard it as his ancestral abode and future inheritance.

Cardinal Macchi, who had something to do with the archives of the Vatican, usually stood by the Pope's side at the great ceremonies. I desired, therefore, to make a study of the Cardinal's head, and his brother arranged an interview for me with him in order that the matter might be settled.

On the appointed day I called on His Eminence, who, to my surprise, received me most ungraciously. Whether he expected somebody else, or was only in a bad temper, I cannot tell; but from the moment I entered the room his manner was so objectionable that I omitted to make the usual genuflexion, and stood upon my dignity.

He took my hand with a bad grace, and only for the purpose of trying to force me on my knees. He soon gave up the effort, however, and, without touching on the subject of my visit, I curtly took my leave.

Speaking quite dispassionately, when I saw his face at close quarters I was repulsed.

On that countenance, if Lavater's conclusions are right and my judgment correct, were imprinted cunning, deceit, and avarice. The Cardinal had a most unenviable reputation in Rome, and he certainly looked the character he was rumoured to be.

As, however, I desired to represent him in the place he occupied at the Obbedienza beside the Pope, not only for the sake of accuracy, but as a foil to the Holy Father, I made a study of the Cardinal's head from memory,

## Recollections of a Court Painter

and I must confess the likeness is not altogether bad.

When staying the following summer with King William of Wurtemberg at Friedrichshafen, I told him of my interview with Cardinal Macchi.

He then related a somewhat similar experience when, for the first and only time, he visited Rome, and called on one of the cardinals. The idea of a genuflexion, of course, never entered his Protestant mind, but the Cardinal, as he held his hand, tried his utmost to force his Majesty on his knee. The King thought it a peculiarity of the clerical way of shaking hands, until later one of his entourage enlightened him.

At the time of which I write Sir Philip Currie occupied the Embassy. I had known three former Ambassadors in Rome—Sir John Saville, Sir Clare Ford, and Lord Dufferin.

Sir John Saville, like his brother Augustus Lumley, was devoted to painting. During his period of office in Madrid he made some very fine copies of Velasquez and Murillo, which he brought to Rome, where they embellished the otherwise bare walls of the Embassy.

He was followed by Sir Clare Ford, also moved up from Madrid. Sir Clare was the most easy-going and amiable of mankind, and the willing slave of his son, an *enfant gâté* in every sense of the word.

Johnny Ford was a nice-looking boy, with a nonchalant, blasé manner, as if he were already tired of life, having sampled all its sweets, and finding few to his entire satisfaction.

He was then about twenty-four years of age,

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spoilt by his father and the ladies he condescended to notice, but nevertheless very amusing when feeling less tired than usual. At the Embassy he was a tyrant, and his slightest wish law.

Sir Clare once invited me to a bachelor dinner-party, and with six or seven mutual friends I arrived at the Embassy punctually, finding the Ambassador ready to receive us in his usual cordial hearty way. There was a long wait, during which he began to get nervous.

"I'm afraid Johnny must have forgotten all about it," he said; "perhaps we had better commence without him."

We had finished the soup when Johnny appeared, nodded to the party, and took his seat at the end of the table.

"Sorry to keep you people waiting," he said dryly, as he tasted the soup. Then he put his spoon back in the soup plate, and looked at his father reproachfully.

"You really must get a new *chef*," he exclaimed; "I have already complained about the soup."

"So sorry, Johnny; so sorry, dear boy. I will see about it! Certainly, he must pay more attention."

The champagne was served with the fish, and Sir Clare watched Johnny with an anxious gaze as he drank the first glass. Fear filled the Ambassador's heart, as his critical offspring fixed an indignant eye on him.

"Where on earth did you get this stuff?"

"Same wine merchant, Johnny, same wine merchant; too bad if you don't like it!—awfully sorry!"

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Johnny's feelings were too strong for words, and after some consideration he came to a supreme resolution.

"This kind of thing can't go on," he announced; "I really must take the matter in hand myself. It's a nuisance, but I really must."

"So kind of you, dear boy; I wish you would. I confess I'm no good at it myself," replied his indulgent and long-suffering parent.

As the dinner progressed some of the courses met with Johnny's approval, and he became quite good-humoured and pleasant, restoring thereby his father to a happy state of mind. We later went together to the Palazzo Colonna, where he forgot his domestic troubles, making languid love to the then object of his devotion.

Towards the end of my stay in Rome the remarkable vitality of the Pope was proved by his undergoing an operation, for a large growth in the groin, which would have killed many a younger man.

He was then eighty-six or eighty-seven, and as the operation would be painful, the surgeon desired to administer an anæsthetic; but His Holiness absolutely refused anything of the kind. He preferred enduring the pain of the knife to the possibility of never awaking again.

The operation took place, and His Holiness bore the agony with fortitude. Nearly a quart of matter was withdrawn, the august patient deeply interested in this proceeding much as a child would be, frequently expressing his wonder to the physician that so frail a body as his could accumulate so large an amount.

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Recovery was rapid ; and it seemed likely that the Pope's dearest wish, that of attaining the age of one hundred years, would be fulfilled.

My departure from Rome followed soon after the Pope's recovery, and during the following season in London I held an exhibition of my work, the *Obbedienza* occupying the place of honour. The picture met with a favourable reception from the press ; but the expression of opinion that gratified me most was conveyed in a letter from the late Cardinal Vaughan, in which he wrote to me :

“ Your picture is simply grand and life-like.”

## AUSTRALIA

### I

**I**N October 1901 I left London for Australia on board a steamship of the Orient Line. Apart from the quarrels which invariably distinguish a long sea voyage, arising generally from lack of other distraction for the ladies on board, there was little of interest to record until we arrived at Ceylon.

Colombo fascinated me.

It was my first glimpse of Asiatic life, and the bright-eyed laughing children, running about like so many little bronze dancing fauns, were an artistic delight to contemplate. I happened to pass by a Hindoo Temple whilst some festival was taking place. A crowd of these merry creatures, with garlands of flowers on their heads, and the sun glistening on their little nude bodies, as on burnished copper, were marching around, with offerings of blossoms which they carried in their hands to lay on the shrine of Vishnu. It was the prettiest sight imaginable! Gay and happy, like a cluster of song-birds they chirped their little hymn to the gentle God, whose benign protection they invoked with laughter and merriment. I could not help contrasting the bright scene before me with the gloomy depressing kill-joy order of ceremonies associated with (supposedly) more enlightened sects. Truly,

## Australia

“les religions Antiques étaient des couronnes de roses, la religion Chrétienne est un mouchoir de poche, elle sert quand on pleure.”

The Southern Cross, which we first beheld on approaching Australia, was a most disappointing spectacle. Not nearly so fine or brilliant a constellation as the Big Bear, it is difficult to understand why it has a world-wide reputation for beauty.

At this period of the voyage I witnessed a fight at sea between a “thresher” and a whale. The thresher is the giant sportsman of the seas. Accompanied by a swordfish, he sallies forth from his cove when a school of whales (of which family he is a renegade member) comes in sight. Boldly attacking the first encountered, he springs clear out of the water, alighting with a terrible thud on the whale's back. The swordfish simultaneously dives underneath the whale, prodding its stomach with the sword, thereby obliging it to remain on the surface; for otherwise it would sink and escape. The thresher, shorter and thicker than the whale, then gets some kind of hold on the latter's head, and raising his body vertically in the air, falls with tremendous force on the back of his prey, repeating the operation (whilst the swordfish is busily prodding underneath) until the gigantic creature is dead. Perfectly satisfied with this result the two assailants then retire, leaving the remains to innumerable sharks, so far only spectators of the sanguinary fray, who now like jackals fall on the immense carcass, ravenously devouring it as it sinks out of view.

We passed quite close to the combatants as

## Recollections of a Court Painter

this titanic struggle was taking place ; the tumult and disturbance of the water, as the great creatures rolled and struggled, being extraordinary.

Later, in the smoking-room, the fight we had just witnessed was the engrossing subject of conversation.

“ Talking of whales,” said a New Zealander, “ are you aware that we catch them in nets at home ? ”

“ Oh ! that’s nothing,” answered an Australian. “ We grow oysters on trees like apples.”

I looked with a tired, incredulous smile from one to the other, uncertain which was the more worthy descendant of Ananias, and went up on deck to breathe a little pure air. Strange, however, as it may appear, I did them both a grave injustice. I later saw, with my own eyes, oysters growing on trees in Botany Bay ; up to about eight feet from the ground, where the high tide had left them, they covered the trunks in myriads ; the trees themselves growing out of the muddy strand exposed at low water.

Regarding the story of the whales being caught in nets, that also is true. There is a narrow passage on the coast of New Zealand, where the granite cliffs on both sides run sheer down to a great depth. The whales delight in passing through this channel, in order to scratch themselves and rub off the barnacles, which tease and irritate them. As they are engaged in this agreeable occupation an iron netting, not unlike a torpedo defence, is dropped at each end of the passage ; and whilst so imprisoned the whales are attacked and killed.

## Australia

Our first stop in Australia was at Fremantle, where I met the engineer (a South of Ireland man) who had successfully finished the harbour works ; previous engineers having failed in consequence of the shifting sands.

He was brought from New Zealand, where his reputation was great, to undertake the apparently impossible task. He overcame the difficulties which baffled his predecessors, and at the time of my visit had transferred his attention to the creation of a great hydraulic system to supply water to the goldfields up country. He complained bitterly of the manner in which his plans and work were hampered and thwarted by the municipal authorities and Parliamentary Commission, to whom he was responsible. The trouble with these bodies arose from his blunt refusal to be a party to corruption and graft in connection with the contracts ; and, deprived of their pickings, these gentry caused him all the annoyance in their power. Later their hostility and obstructive tactics preyed on his mind, and to my regret I read of his suicide in the Sydney papers. He shot himself, leaving a note stating that the persecution he suffered having undermined his health and reputation he had no longer any desire to live. By his death the Antipodes lost its ablest engineer.

Our next stopping-place was Adelaide. As we anchored, the stretches of sand dunes visible reminded me of Holland, but the dry heat of the city (which is some miles inland) more resembled Cairo in summer. I had a letter to the Governor-General, Lord Tennyson, from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, but on calling at Government House

## Recollections of a Court Painter

found to my regret that His Excellency was up country.

We sailed the following day for Melbourne, encountering on our way a terrible storm in the "bight," accompanied by huge hailstones, and a drop to freezing-point in the temperature.

The "Northern Buster" was blowing as we approached the capital of Victoria, increasing in violence as the ship came alongside the dock. The thermometer stood at 112 degrees in the shade; the hot air, laden with fine dust, burning our lips and eyes.

The sun, obscured by the dusty atmosphere, resembled a bronze disk; whilst the wind, driving clouds of dust before it with the force of a hurricane, whistled and shrieked as if it were some horrible monster devouring everything on its way.

Never have I experienced such physical distress as I suffered on that first day in Melbourne. Outdoors there was no escape from the burning wind and suffocating dust, to keep out which all the windows of the hotel were hermetically sealed; the heat indoors being consequently intolerable, especially in contrast to the freshness of the open sea. After registering my name I got on a trolley car running to the sea front, hoping to get a breath of air, but all the way down I gasped in the hot cloud of dust which followed. When the car reached its destination near the sea, I suffered positive agony in my throat and nostrils, which felt as if they had been burnt, whilst an insatiable thirst devoured me.

I rushed to the nearest bar, and no man enjoyed its hospitality more than I did. I was assured

## Australia

there that the wind would change at sunset, so I stayed on. Sure enough, the gale veered round from the north to the south within an hour; then I returned to the hotel accompanied by a cold refreshing wind, and very nearly the same complement of dust.

This Northern Buster scourge of Victoria (also called "the Scavenger," owing to the fact that it sweeps the streets of all impurities, and is death to microbes) arises in the desert wastes of the north of Australia, increases in velocity as it proceeds southwards, until eventually, laden with the sand and dust of the thousands of miles it has traversed, it strikes Melbourne with terrific force.

It withers, blights, and destroys everything in its path; but fortunately dies down with the sun, or rather is driven back by the stronger gale from the South Pole, which opposes and vanquishes it about that hour. If the Northern Buster continued for forty-eight hours, it would, I believe, annihilate the population.

On the occasion I mention it lasted ten hours, and had been preceded a week before by a hail-storm which broke most of the windows in Melbourne, and destroyed innumerable cattle and sheep. I saw photographs of the hailstones. Some were as large as a hen's egg, whilst the average was the size of a pigeon's egg.

The morning after my arrival not a trace of the storm remained. The sun shed its glorious rays from a cloudless azure sky, whilst the air was deliciously pure and crisp. The Earl of Hopetoun, afterwards Marquis of Linlithgow, whom I had known in London, was then

## Recollections of a Court Painter

Governor-General. My first visit therefore was to Government House to pay my respects to His Excellency.

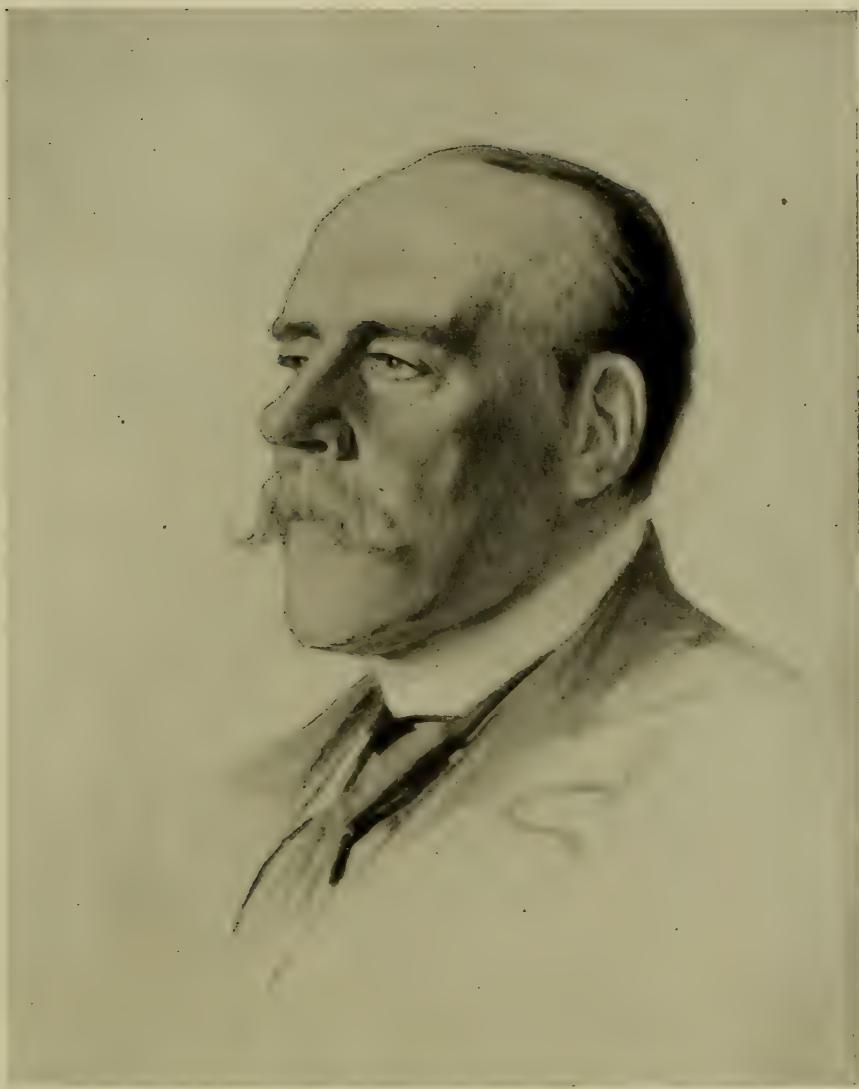
Lord Hopetoun was then thirty-six or thirty-seven years of age ; but, with his delicate face and slight figure, did not look more than twenty-five. He suffered from consumption, and the dry climate of Australia suited him better than any other. He told me during lunch that he had never felt so well as whilst the exceptional conditions and suffocating heat of the previous day prevailed, and when they ceased the cool southern breeze which brought general relief to others affected him adversely.

Lady Hopetoun, a countrywoman of mine, I met for the first time. She was both charming and pretty, devoted to her husband and children. She did not share his appreciation of the Northern Buster ; nor, I fancy, did she care for Australia or its people.

Melbourne resembles an American city, the streets being laid out in straight lines, and at right angles to each other ; the finest building those of the American Insurance Companies, rivalling the palatial business houses of New York. Nor, as I discovered later, is the likeness superficial, American ideals being more sympathetic to the people of Melbourne than English.

Differing from Sydney in many respects, Melbourne prides itself upon the distinction that its citizens are sons of freemen ; whilst those of Sydney are largely descended from the forty-seven or fifty thousand convicts sent out in the old penal days from England.

When Sydney refused to receive any more



*A study*

SIR MORTIMER DUKAND  
*British Ambassador at Washington, 1904*



## Australia

convicts, the English Government tried to force their criminal refuse on the newly formed province of Victoria. But the people of Melbourne fired on the convict ship when it arrived in the harbour, and obliged it to turn back. Driven from Melbourne, it then steered for Van Diemen's Land, where it deposited its wretched cargo. After that lesson the English Government considered it the better part of valour not to trouble Melbourne with convicts again.

My stay in Melbourne was a short one ; nevertheless I found time to run up country for a few days with a friend, and there made acquaintance with the great forests of gum trees. One could then realise, and only then, the enormous difficulties overcome by the early explorers who first penetrated their appalling depths.

The peculiarity of these eucalyptus forests is the impassable nature of the undergrowth, rendered still more difficult of passage by the countless fallen trees. This undergrowth, so dense and high, makes it dangerous for the straggler to wander alone, even a few yards from the beaten track, as more likely than not he will never find it again.

There is no game of any kind, and no sound disturbs the silence excepting now and then the shrill cry of a parrot in the clearings. Of bird life there is none in that awful gloom and solitude. Many of the trees, stripped of their bark by fire and other causes, are perfectly white, and by moonlight resemble weird, many-armed ghosts.

My friend was a Melbourne man, and knew the country well. We stayed at a small hotel

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situated in a clearing in the forest, and were the only guests in the house.

After dinner, as we sat on the verandah, myriads of stars glittering like diamonds overhead, the profound silence of night around us, he told me this curious story of a murder associated with the little hotel.

“I showed you,” he said, “a small cottage about a mile from here. It was inhabited when this hotel was built by an old couple who were supposed to have saved a good deal of money, which, not trusting the banks, they kept in the house.

“They lived an isolated life, for within a radius of ten miles their only neighbour was the owner of this hotel. The old people not having been seen for some time this lady went to the house to inquire after them, and receiving no response to her knock, opened the door and looked inside. To her horror she discovered the room in great disorder, and lying on the floor the old couple most cruelly murdered. A hue and cry was raised ; the police from Melbourne scoured the country, but no trace of the miscreant who had perpetrated the deed could be discovered.

“Whilst all this was taking place, our hostess here was much concerned by the discovery of daily pilfering in her larder. Different foodstuffs disappeared, but fearing to mention the matter, in case her servants should leave her (a serious matter in so remote a place), she held her peace.

“The hotel was nearly full of people, when there arrived with his son a wealthy Melbourne merchant, to whom was given the last remaining room on the upper floor, which the two shared.

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The father was devoted to his son, a young man of excellent character and marked ability. On the evening of their arrival, whilst preparing for dinner, they deliberated what had best be done with a pocket-book belonging to the merchant, as it contained a large amount of money. The son suggested that his father should put the book in the pocket of his overcoat, and hang the latter in the wardrobe, where it would be safe. This advice was followed, and they both went down to dinner. The following morning, on feeling in the pocket of the overcoat, the merchant to his dismay found that the book containing the money was gone. He accused his son of the theft, who repudiated the accusation in the strongest terms. Beside himself with rage, the father gave the son in charge of the police still investigating the murder case, and he was taken in custody to Melbourne. There he was tried ; the circumstantial evidence was overwhelming ; he alone knew where his father had placed the pocket-book, and it was clearly proved that no servant or guest in the house had entered the bedroom during their absence. Convicted of the robbery, the unhappy youth committed suicide in gaol.

“Now comes the remarkable part of the story,” continued my Melbourne friend, after a pause during which he lighted another cigarette.

“The search for the murderer of the old people continued ; suspicion having centred on a carpenter who had been employed during the building of the hotel, and who had disappeared mysteriously at the time of the murder. No trace of him could be found ; when one day he

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surrendered himself, emaciated and starving, having wandered in the forest for weeks. He confessed his guilt, and made the following statement :

“ After committing the crime, seeking desperately for means of escape, he suddenly remembered that over a certain bedroom in the hotel he had helped to erect was a loft, reached through an unnoticeable trap-door in the ceiling by means of a ladder he himself had left in a closet adjoining the bed-chamber. He decided to hide if possible in this attic ; and the hotel happening to be empty just then, easily found an opportunity to enter unobserved, and reached the bedroom. To his delight he discovered the ladder still in its place, gained the attic, pulled up the ladder, and closed the trap-door.

“ In the stillness of the night he descended to the kitchen, where he helped himself to the food and drink he required, returning to his attic with a further supply. Thus he contrived to exist, waiting patiently for police activity to cease.

“ When, however, he heard occupants (the Melbourne man and his son) in the room below, he feared discovery sooner or later. He listened eagerly to their conversation, as they discussed the hiding of the pocket-book. When the coast was clear, he dropped from his attic, closed the opening behind him, abstracted the pocket-book, and whilst every one was at dinner slipped out of the house.

“ The wretched father, already broken-down by the disgrace attached to his son’s death, was unable to support the shock of this revelation ; it unhinged his mind, and he died later in a lunatic asylum.”

# Australia

## II

Sydney Harbour, if not the finest, is certainly one of the grandest and most picturesque harbours in the world. Its narrow entrance, guarded by granite bluffs which rise abruptly from the sea, gradually widens out, following a sinuous course until Sydney itself comes in sight. Innumerable bays and arms stretch out in all directions from the main body of waters, giving variety to the landscape and additional charm to the view. The granite formation continued to flank our course as the great ship steamed up the harbour, until we came alongside the landing-stage at the foot of one of the principal streets, where it rose in a straight line from a depth of 300 feet.

The harbour was alive with daintily constructed ferry-boats flying backwards and forwards to their different destinations in the bays, which are not unlike the teeth of a cogwheel around Sydney. At night the effects produced by these boats is quite charming and unique. As they dash past each other in all directions and large numbers, brilliantly lit up by electric lamps, they resemble gigantic fireflies. They were exceedingly neat and well-appointed, and I later found that the most enjoyable way of spending the evening after the great heat of the day was to take a steamboat ticket to any destination, and go careering over the harbour, changing the course as the fancy took me.

Sydney with its narrow irregular streets somewhat resembles Boston, whilst its car and ferry

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services are perhaps the best of their kind in the world.

There is one large hotel at Sydney, built and conducted on the American principle, admirably managed and most comfortable. The table "laisse beaucoup a desirer," but as indifferent cooking is the rule and not the exception in Australia, one ceased to pay attention to it.

A good deal is said about Australian hospitality, but as far as my experience goes the meaning of the word is not even understood there. I had a number of letters to Australians of note, but I do not remember having bite or sup in one of their houses; a drink at the bar, or in a club, beginning and ending the welcome. Squatters living up country in dreary wastes and awful solitudes, fifty or a hundred miles from their neighbours and longing for human society, will naturally be glad to entertain you if you are content to subsist on unlimited tea and badly-cooked meat. It, however, takes a sanguine spirit and exceptional stomach to enjoy such a treat, and not being so endowed, I preferred the more assured comforts of the hotel.

As in America, the servant problem is the bane of Australia, and possibly explains the absence of hospitality, as we understand the term. There being no law to govern their movements, incompetent girls without characters or even references come into a house as waitress, help, or cook, stay just as long as pleases them, and then leave without any notice whatsoever, their wages paid to date of departure.

Whilst in Sydney an acquaintance I made there, a man of considerable means, wishing to

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show me some kindly attention, invited me on a few occasions to dinner in his handsome residence, and never was such atrocious cooking perpetrated as then. My host possessed a fine silver service in which were served joints burnt to a cinder, fish and fowl ruined in the same manner, or absolutely raw. The most stupid kitchen-maid in England would not disgrace her mistress with such meals, yet these were the performances of a highly-paid impostor who called herself a cook.

The same conditions exist in all the smaller hotels of the pretty suburbs. There the food, including bread, is not only bad as bad can be, but on returning from a walk with vigorous appetite, you are frequently greeted by the news that the servants have left in a body, and that there is nothing at all to eat.

In the face of such household difficulties I am not surprised that the Australian population practically falls back on tea, which is easily made. The abuse of this beverage accounts for the deterioration of physique to be noticed in Sydney, as well as in England, from the same cause. The amount of tea drunk in Sydney and New South Wales, in fact in all Australia, exceeds belief. I have seen a man up country drink nine cups, one after the other, eating huge chunks of bread and butter at the same time, then finish up with whisky; and this was his customary evening meal. Inordinate tea drinking, or rather tannin drinking, prevails as much in the cities as up country, and apart from other evils is responsible, I should think, for the stomachic complaints and poverty of blood from which most Australians seem to suffer.

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The "squatters," as the owners of large estates and sheep-runs up country are called, constitute the aristocratic class of New South Wales. They form a majority in the Union Club of Sydney, whose members are considered "*la crème de la crème*" of Sydney society.

A large number are immediate descendants of that criminal element to which I have referred, who, by industry and enterprise, on release or ticket-of-leave, built up fortunes with which they purchased large tracts of land from the Government. I believe that there are still some members of this club, men of standing and great wealth to-day, who would be obliged to ask the permission of the police authorities if they desired to leave Sydney on a visit to England.

The pure untainted element is represented by the Irish emigrants, and as they are largely Roman Catholics, whilst the descendants of the English convicts are exclusively Protestant, there exists a bitter hostility between the two races.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral of Sydney is a fine imposing building, and shortly after my arrival my footsteps turned in its direction, as I had a letter of introduction to present to Cardinal Moran, who lived close by. The Cardinal gave me a most kind and paternal welcome.

About six feet two inches in height, erect and dignified in bearing, his scarlet robes falling in ample folds around him, Cardinal Moran, at seventy-five years of age, impressed me as one of the most imposing personalities I had beheld, a splendid specimen of manhood for his years. I could understand the profound respect, venera-

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tion and affection he inspired in the large body of Catholics under his sway.

The intensity of their love and devotion was only exceeded by the force of hatred exhibited towards the Cardinal by the extreme Protestant party, whose bigotry resembled in an acute form that of the Orangemen in the North of Ireland.

The contemplation of their religious strife destroyed another of my illusions.

I had imagined that in a new country under more liberal conditions, the bigotry and intolerance which disfigured England in a bygone age would be remarkable by their absence. Quite the contrary, I found to my astonishment that they had taken a new lease of life in Australia.

Personally I take little interest in differences of religion, considering that if faithfully followed one creed is as good as another ; and why people, as Daniel O'Connell said, "should hate each other for the love of God" passes my understanding.

A grave menace to the future prosperity of Australia lies in the fact that infanticide is practised to an appalling extent in that country. As in all warm climates youths and maidens mature extremely young, it is not unusual for girls of ten or eleven to give birth to a child. Parents have, as a rule, no control over the young people, who roam about at their own sweet will, taking advantage of the countless holidays in Australia, for picnics in the woods and long excursions, entirely without any surveillance, and this untrammelled intercourse, united with the general laxity of morals, produces lamentable results.

The ambition of the people is to have a "white

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Australia," but I fail to see how they are going to realise their dream, in view of the fact, that whilst the Labour Unions prevent the influx of new blood, the race is if anything diminishing.

You have only to walk through the streets of Melbourne or Sydney, and note the objects filling the windows of the chemists' stores in order to understand the chief cause of this undesirable state of affairs. You will observe there every invention, in drug or contrivance, that the mind of man has so far conceived to prevent propagation of the human species. Chemists in other countries are not above keeping a similar stock, but such articles are mysteriously brought forth, on demand, from a modest recess; in Australia, on the contrary, he who runs must read, attention being directed to these supplies in the brightly lit stores, testifying to the existing demand.

The statesmen of Australia quite realise the gravity of the situation, but they are powerless to legislate on the subject, fearing the opposition of the different churches.

Infanticide does not exist in Italy, and rarely in France. Why is this? Simply because both countries, unlike the superior Anglo-Saxon family, deal mercifully with the natural consequences of human frailty.

In Florence there is an admirable convent "Per i Bambini" (il Bigallo), with a niche near the door, just large enough to contain a small cradle.

When an unhappy girl is unable to nurse her illegitimate offspring, and support herself at the same time, instead of destroying the innocent

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baby, as is too frequently done in England and Australia, she carries it to this convent and rings the bell ; the door of the niche then opens, and a nun takes in the child.

No questions are asked, and the young mother disappears into the night. The Government, truly paternal, takes care of the child's education after it leaves the kind nuns ; and with the same solicitude follows later on its settlement in life.

I brought this Florentine system of dealing with the evil to Mr. Edmund Barton's attention.

Mr. Barton (now Sir Edmund), then Premier of New South Wales, a remarkably gifted and able man, quite saw the advantages of the more humane method I advocated, and appreciated its applicability to Australia, but informed me that no Minister would retain office for twenty-four hours after he brought such a measure before the House ; he would be denounced by every religious body as an unspeakable libertine, and an avowed panderer to vice.

My picture of "The Obbedienza" was on exhibition in January 1902, and I had the honour of receiving Cardinal Moran on the opening day. He expressed warm approval of the work, and later, with the co-operation of his friends, acquired it for the Cathedral.

Cardinal Moran's summer residence was at a pretty place called Manly, about an hour from Sydney, and commanding the harbour. I had the pleasure of lunching with him there one day, when the party consisted of the Cardinal, Dean O'Hara, his able and accomplished secretary,

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three young priests,<sup>1</sup> and a French Jesuit Father who did not speak English, but spoke Italian. We were five Irishmen and one Frenchman. A singular circumstance distinguishing this lunch was, that in so remote a corner of the British dominions Italian should be the language used during the meal, spoken more or less well by every man present, by the Cardinal best of all.

I painted a portrait of Mr. O'Sullivan, the then Minister of Works, an able and incorruptible administrator, with a strong pugnacious type of countenance. His life had been one long fight from printer's devil to Minister of the Crown; and at this moment he was more or less at war with the Labour Party.

I was once present when he received a deputation from that body. It was evident from the suppressed defiance of his attitude, and their sullen aggressive demeanour, that the subject (which I cannot recall) under discussion was a cause of bitter contention. They strove to impose their will upon him, and hinted at the Minister's possible fall if he did not entertain their views. In clear and trenchant words he pointed out his duty to the public (which did not happen to harmonise with the object of the deputation), declaring, in conclusion, that under no pressure would he depart from it, the dictation of the Labour Party notwithstanding.

The deputation retired, and at the next General Election Minister O'Sullivan was put out of office.

I do not pretend to understand the ramifications of the different Labour Unions in Australia,

<sup>1</sup> All the priests had been students in Rome.

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but one thing is certain, they constitute the reigning power there.

The Ministers in office are only so many marionettes who perform for the world in general, the leaders of the Labour Party pulling the strings.

If these puppets refuse to act according to directions, they are thrown aside as useless, and this was the fate of my friend, the Minister for Public Works.

One of my pleasantest recollections of Sydney was a journey made with Mr. O'Sullivan to the top of Mount Kosciusko, where he went officially to inspect the district with the object of founding a national sanatorium for tuberculosis.

There were several other officials in the party, some members of Parliament, a photographer, and myself.

We went by train up country until we reached the limit of the line, where in a straggling town with houses and shanties planted down in a haphazard fashion, we found the whole population assembled at the station to greet the Minister. We proceeded in triumphal procession to the hotel to lunch, after which there was much speechifying, and Minister O'Sullivan put forward the pleasantest aspect of his Government's policy with an eye to the coming elections.

Early that afternoon we left in a wagonette drawn by six sturdy horses, on a fifty-mile drive to our next stopping-place.

On the way several "Devil's Holes" were pointed out to me, and the sinister significance of the name explained. During the droughts which plague Australia, when the starving sheep

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burrow like pigs for the roots of the burnt-up grass, and wander disconsolately over the country in search of water, they smell the moisture from these holes, and rush, in wildest confusion, to get the first drink. As the thirsty famishing sheep drink the water on the surface, they sink gradually into the mud and, the stampede continuing, are trampled down by the newcomers, who in turn also disappear.

In such manner the awful mouth of the "Devil" will swallow down a whole flock of ten or fifteen thousand sheep, of whom no traces will remain.

I remember once asking Sir Richard Owen how it was that such an extraordinary accumulation of prehistoric remains is sometimes found in one spot, for example at a certain place in Belgium, where the deposit of gigantic bones piled up in a confined area is limitless.

"Devil's Holes" were then evidently unknown to him, as he conjectured that these great creatures, wild with thirst, either fell from a cliff, or were pushed over by the others behind, in a common desire to reach the water of a river.

I am now more inclined to think that they met their fate in much the same manner as the sheep in Australia, and that a "Devil's Hole" of the Devonian period is responsible for the tragedy.

The drought was in its sixth year when I visited Australia, and in consequence the country we passed through was like a brickyard, not a blade of grass to be seen anywhere. Millions of sheep had died from hunger and thirst, and great distress prevailed in districts where, in normal

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times, the red, burnt wastes, were rich green pasture-lands, supporting large flocks.

Bleached bones of cattle and sheep strewed our path, and the whole aspect was desolate in the extreme. Here and there, like oases in the desert, were farm-houses or squatters' dwellings surrounded by green trees or shrubs, indicating the presence of a well, the only water in the district.

As we approached the neighbourhood of Mount Kosciusko, the road, so far perfectly level, began to rise, and we were soon engaged in a hilly country, most fatiguing for the horses. The sun had set some time when we reached our destination, a small hamlet composed of a modest hotel, a schoolhouse, and a few scattered dwellings.

At its foot flowed a branch of the river Darling, whilst in the distance Mount Kosciusko raised its misty cone-like form from the surrounding plain. The clear, pellucid waters of the flowing river were most refreshing to contemplate after our long and dusty drive.

As O'Sullivan was the first Minister of the Crown to visit the spot, his welcome was most cordial. A dance had been arranged to celebrate the occasion ; and, as a natural result, the boys and girls from hundreds of miles around had ridden in to have a good time ; a rare event in so sparsely inhabited a district.

The place was picketed with horses, and most of the men who greeted us were in well-worn riding costume ; the "Amazons" wore the usual English riding-habits, and were remarkably tall, handsome girls, full of animal spirits. It was difficult to realise as one watched them ex-

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changing banter with the shyer, nobler sex, that most had just completed a ride of over one hundred miles.

About nine o'clock the ball opened in the small schoolroom ; the Minister and myself leading a kind of royal quadrille with the two principal ladies. The festive scene was illuminated by some candles in beer-bottles, whilst the music was supplied by three volunteers who produced the necessary harmony from a whistle, a flute, and a concertina.

The room was crowded and suffocatingly hot ; but in spite of such drawbacks these strapping boys and girls enjoyed themselves in a manner that would have drawn tears of envy from a *débutante* in a palatial ball-room. After we had done our duty conscientiously, Minister O'Sullivan and myself, bathed in perspiration, were glad to escape outside, where we found relays of impatient would-be dancers eagerly waiting for their turn to enter.

The dance continued until five o'clock next morning, keeping our party awake most of the night. At six o'clock, when some of us went for a swim, the boys and girls were saddling up, preparatory to the long ride home.

They seemed little the worse for the night's dissipation, which, when one considers the deadly monotony of their existence, must have been a golden event in their lives. They also appeared to think nothing of the actual feat of endurance they had performed. Off they went on their hot and dusty journey, as if refreshed by a long night's sleep, merry as larks.

Mount Kosciusko is the highest mountain in

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Australia, rising to an altitude of 7336 feet. It took us nearly a day and a half on horseback to reach the summit, the descent, of course, occupying considerably less time. We started from the scene of the dance about nine o'clock in the morning, the Minister in a buggy, the rest of us mounted on indifferent steeds.

It was 100 degrees in the shade when the buggy led the way ; the cavalcade, formed into a guard of honour, following as it forded the river. Two guides headed the procession ; the trail lay for several miles amidst thick undergrowth, then crossed open country and gradually rose towards the mountain. As we ascended the air became cooler, much to our relief, as some of the party were beginning to suffer extremely from the heat. But just as the others were feeling more comfortable the troubles of Minister O'Sullivan commenced. By this time the track had disappeared, and, over boulders, great rocks, and hummocks, the buggy rocked backwards and forwards, sometimes at an acute angle, when the Minister might be observed with his body half-way over one side, striving to balance the vehicle, and so avert a calamity.

He weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds, and it required his most strenuous balancing powers at times to prevent the trap from overturning. His plight was perhaps worst when the buggy rose on the wheel nearest the driver. O'Sullivan's weight then increased the peril of an upset, and on such occasions their united and desperate efforts to avoid a spill were pathetic to behold.

How that buggy ever got over such ground

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without falling to pieces is a mystery to me now, the bed of a mountain torrent being smooth by comparison with the road it followed.

We traversed bogs, very soft in parts, and now and then one of the wheels would sink to the axle, whilst the other remained on comparatively firm turf. When these sinkings occurred on his side of the buggy, the poor Minister clutched at the driver, who in turn hung over the uplifted side of the cart, until we cautiously approached to their assistance. Altogether, O'Sullivan was sadly shaken and worn out when at last we arrived at a grove of oaks, where a halt was called for lunch.

The guides were excellent cooks in a rough way. They soon had a fire going, and whilst the water was boiling for tea grilled a quantity of mutton cutlets to perfection. We enjoyed the meal immensely, feasting our eyes at the same time on the beautiful panorama presented to our view.

After lunch we continued our upward journey through groves of oaks, which diminished in size as we ascended, becoming dwarf specimens when we reached the higher latitudes. The air was cold as we left the oaks behind and encountered a new order of tree-life, whilst strange and fantastic granite formations riveted our attention.

These were caused by erosion and the action of the sun, which, disintegrating the softer formation (afterwards scattered by the wind), leaves the harder granite in place; the resulting effect somewhat resembling the Garden of the Gods in Colorado.

Good pasture land also appeared, and we noticed flocks of sheep in the hollows around.

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Our camp for the night now came in view, and stiff and tired as we all were, the sight filled us with joy. I literally fell off my horse when we arrived, and as for the much bruised Minister, he had to be lifted out of the buggy with the tenderest care.

The sun was setting as we stretched our aching limbs, and stamped about, to restore circulation to chilled feet and hands. As it disappeared a cold biting wind arose, lowering the temperature to freezing-point.

The camp was pitched near the sheep-pens, and we could see from our elevation the drover on horseback and hear the barking of the dogs, as they drove the flocks in our direction. A great log-fire was soon alight; its welcome blaze not taking long to restore us to a happy frame of mind.

As we sat in a circle around the fire, enjoying its warmth, a sheep's carcass was roasted in the skin.

It was not appetising to look at when cooked, but, most important point of all, tasted delicious, and was the only meal I had so far eaten in Australia that I relished entirely.

Later we told stories and sang songs until bed-time, when the Minister and I slept in a small shelter, on a couch of aromatic leaves, with saddles for pillows, the others sleeping under canvas. During the night we were awakened by a great disturbance in the sheep-pens, caused by the coyotes or wild dogs, who were busy killing the sheep.

At seven o'clock next morning we were in the saddle again, starting on the last stage of our

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journey. We soon reached a bleak, desolate region, where no vegetable life existed; not even the hardiest shrubs. The patches of eternal snow were coloured a dirty red from the desert sand, which attains this height during the "Northern Buster." The cold was intense.

The incline, as we approached the summit, was desperately steep at times, and poor Minister O'Sullivan was again in dire straits. The skill exhibited by the driver in the management of his horses, and the manner in which he piloted the buggy over impossible ground to the summit, passes all admiration. It was the first time the feat had been performed, and all honour is due to the wielder of the whip, who had so successfully accomplished a hazardous undertaking.

A gale was blowing on the mountain top, which increased the penetrating quality of the Siberian cold we found there. Nevertheless, with chattering teeth, we all sang "Advance Australia," the Minister, muffled up to the eyes, leading off in stentorian tones. We were chilled to the bone before the song was concluded, and as the last echoes died away we commenced our downward progress to warmer climes.

Before, however, I leave the summit of Mount Kosciusko, I must refer to a very remarkable lake in a hollow, near the crest. This lake is always full of water, but where the water comes from remains a mystery, for this is the highest point in Australia, and there is consequently no drainage from higher mountains.

But the most astonishing feature is the fact that the lake is inhabited by a species of small fish completely blind, which belongs to one of the

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earliest periods of the world's history. I believe this particular form of piscatorial life is not found elsewhere; but on that point defer to the more extensive knowledge of experts on the subject. In any case, and whatever its pedigree may be, how the fish got up to that elevation is as much a puzzle as where the water comes from, remaining, as it does, always at the same level.

Our descent to the temperate zone was made without incident, apart from the fact that the Minister for Works had to perform a different order of acrobatic feats, bringing into play a new set of muscles. We lunched at the same grove of oaks as on the previous day, enjoying the rest even more than on the former occasion, as there is nothing more fatiguing than a sharp and continuous descent on horseback.

When we reached the base of the mountain the heat seemed intolerable after our morning's experience above, although the actual temperature had not varied, and we were glad when the hotel came in sight. In the shade of its verandah we later discussed our exploit, to the accompaniment of liquid refreshments, which we all sadly needed. The party returned to Sydney the following day. Shortly afterwards I bade farewell to my Sydney friends, secured my berth on board ship, and sailed for England.

## ROME

### I

**I** WAS at Maesmawr Hall, my residence in mid-Wales, when in the summer of 1903 the news reached me that the aged Pontiff Leo XIII. was dying. Immersed in my favourite occupation of gardening, I was loth to leave my roses and the shade of the immemorial elms for Rome in the heat of a July sun ; but other considerations prevailed, and I started for the Eternal City. I was anxious to be there before the conclave sat, in order to enlist the influences at my disposal with a view to painting the first portrait of the new Pope.

The day of my arrival in Rome, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. expired. The heat was phenomenal ; the nights fortunately being cool, the air pure and fresh, entirely free from the evil smells of former days. In this respect Rome, thanks to her new and excellent drainage system, has certainly transformed herself into the most desirable residential city in Italy.

The city was full of ecclesiastics, and the lying-in-state of the deceased Pontiff under the dome of St. Peter's attracted enormous crowds, who came to pay their respects to the august defunct. I then gazed for the last time on the pallid, wax-like countenance I remembered so well ; the once mobile features at rest, the quick alert eyes closed



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for ever. As the closely packed multitude defiled past the embalmed remains, the close atmosphere laden with incense was stifling ; quite overpowering in the neighbourhood of the catafalque ; the guard of honour surrounding which had a most trying duty to perform, and although frequently changed, many fainted before relief came, whilst others suffered from indisposition on returning to the guard-room. I also was gasping and exhausted, when at last I found myself outside St. Peter's and took in deep draughts of the pure air of heaven.

Shortly after the Pontiff's death Rome was scandalised by a report that the valuable rings worn by the deceased had been stolen by some person present when he passed away. Rumour credited a member of his own family with the theft, and out of regard for Leo's memory it was said no action would be taken in the matter. The stigma remained until 1907, when Cardinal Macchi died. I was in California at the time, and in the paper one day read with amazement that His Eminence was the alleged thief. The article (an obituary one) recounted his passion for collecting old lace, and the many devious methods he had resorted to—forgery even—in order to procure money for the gratification of this taste. It further related that Cardinal Macchi was one of the few present at Leo XIII.'s deathbed, when, being for a moment alone with the dead, unable to resist the temptation, he seized the opportunity of despoiling the lifeless fingers of those rings, together with such other jewels as he could lay hands on. Unprepossessing as Cardinal Macchi appeared to me, and unfavourable as was his

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reputation in Rome, the scandal is inconceivable ; inconceivable that one so highly placed should descend so low !

A few days later the body of His Holiness was removed to its temporary resting-place ; a niche over the doorway of the choir chapel, where it remains until the death of the succeeding Pontiff. The great ceremony accompanying this removal, which should have been impressive and solemn, was devoid of dignity, owing to the entire lack of proper arrangement.

A crude scaffolding for the hoisting of the coffin into place had been erected at this door ; and the men engaged in the duty wore workmen's blouses, and shouted orders to each other as in the open street. Eventually, after much bungling, the shelf containing the defunct Pontiff was raised on a level with the niche ; when it was found to be too large for the receptacle, and had to be lowered to the ground again. The simple precaution of taking measurements beforehand had apparently been omitted. Much distressed at this contretemps the large assemblage of notables dispersed, after a last glance at the coffin on the pavement, around which were grouped, mopping perspiration from their brows, the discomfited workmen.

In due time the cardinals met in conclave for the election of a new Pope.

As my readers may not be familiar with the exact nature of a conclave, I quote from the life of His Holiness, by Monsignor O'Reilly, a description of that which elected Leo XIII.

The procedure described by Monsignor O'Reilly

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applies with equal accuracy to that adopted by the conclave which elected Pius X. in 1903.

“On both sides of the chapel . . . sixty-four lofty screens have been erected, and in front of these are seats for the cardinals, every seat being numbered. There is before each seat a small square table with writing materials. Each seat is canopied ; the canopy being the emblem of sovereignty : and all these papal electors are now coequal sharers in that sovereignty which they will place undivided on the head of the Pope of their choice.

“And ere yet the early morning hours have passed, the voice of the master of ceremonies, who is here the organ of the church, is heard as he passes along the corridors where the electors are lodged, pronouncing the sacramental formula : ‘In capellam, domini !’—(To the chapel, my lords!). And to the chapel, with the docility of schoolboys so beying a summons to morning prayers, the venerable train of purple-robed prelates go at once. There they take the seats allotted to them, the Camerlengo, Cardinal Pecci, taking that marked ‘number nine’ on the Gospel side, and not far from the altar. The sub-dean celebrates a Low Mass, after which all take their seats. Now begins the real work of election.

“Three cardinals are chosen by vote as scrutineers ; their business is to examine every shedula, billet, or vote, and to note and announce the result. To each elector is given a shedula or voting-paper prepared after a given form. In the centre he writes the name of the person for whom he votes.

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“At the top of the sheet he writes out the first part of the form: ‘I, Cardinal N., elect for Sovereign Pontiff my Most Reverend Lord Cardinal \_\_\_\_.’ The part containing the name of the elector is folded and sealed, leaving visible in the middle space only the name of the candidate he votes for.

“At the lower end of the sheet he then writes a text of Scripture of his own choice, which is also sealed up, like his name at the top, and serves, in case of doubt, to verify his vote and signature.

“These papers having been carefully distributed, one to each of the electors, by the secretary of the conclave, and each cardinal having duly filled the sheet and sealed it, all is ready for the balloting.

“On the altar stands a large chalice with its paten, made and consecrated for this special purpose. The cardinals in due order advance one by one in succession to the altar steps. The elector, kneeling, pronounces in a loud distinct voice the solemn words: ‘I call Christ our Lord, who will judge me, to witness that I elect the person who I think before God should be elected, and which I shall make good in the accessus.’ Then, ascending the platform of the altar, he lays the folded schedula on the paten, and from this drops it into the chalice.

“All the bulletins having been deposited in the chalice, the three scrutineers ascend to the altar. One of them takes the chalice, covers it with the paten, and shakes it well. A second then takes them out and counts them one by

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one into another chalice. There are exactly sixty-one; had there been one more or less the *shedula* must all have been burned, and the balloting must have been begun again.

“The scrutineers now take the second chalice with its contents and carry it to a large square table draped in purple, and so placed that the scrutineers seated at it are plainly in view of all the electors. The senior scrutineer draws from the chalice the first folded paper his hand touches, reads the name written in the open middle space, then hands it to the scrutineer next in seniority, who also reads the name aloud and takes note of it. The third does the same, each name being thus thrice proclaimed aloud.

“Meanwhile, each of the other electors, seated at his own table, has a printed list of all the cardinals before him, and makes a mark opposite to the name thus read out. Twenty-three times the name of Cardinal Joachim Pecci is thus announced. No other member of the conclave receives anything like this number of votes. As the name of the Camerlengo thus comes up with ominous frequency, he is seen to be greatly disturbed. His pale, intellectual, ascetic countenance is overcast by an expression of mingled dismay and grief. Still the number twenty-three is not that of half the electors present, and an absolute two-thirds majority is necessary to an election.

“Thus the first morning session of the conclave passed without any result. The balloting papers are therefore, according to rule, burned, and the blue smoke issuing from the slender stove-pipe thrust through a window in the chapel

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tells the expectant crowd in the square of St. Peter's that no Pope had yet been chosen.

"During the recess each elector had been reflecting on the eminent qualities of the man for whom twenty-three votes were cast in the forenoon. . . . At the second ballot the ceremonial is the same as in the morning. . . .

"Thirty-eight votes, however, did not constitute the two-thirds majority demanded by the canons. So again the voting papers were all burned, and again the anxious crowd of spectators outside in the piazza dispersed, their curiosity unsatisfied.

"It was now most probable that the majority in favour of the Cardinal Camerlengo would, in the session of Wednesday morning, the 20th of February, be so increased as to secure his election,

"The third ballot began at the appointed hour. The Cardinal Camerlengo's distress must indeed have touched his brethren deeply. It was in their eyes only a further evidence of his worthiness . . . so, as the balloting proceeded, and he sat prostrated at first, then calmer, resigned, and prayerful, his name was announced with the same prophetic frequency till the preceding number, thirty-eight, was passed, and forty-four votes were recorded in his favour. It was more than a two-thirds majority, and left no room for further scrutiny. Will Cardinal Pecci accept? He sits mute, pale, with closed eyes, as if his spirit were far away from the place and scene.

"The master of ceremonies, accompanied by the sub-dean, the senior cardinal priest, and

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the cardinal deacon, approach the seat 'number nine.'

"Do you accept the election canonically made of you as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church?" asks the sub-dean amid a silence so painful that one might almost hear one's heart beat. Cardinal Pecci rises; his whole frame shakes with uncontrollable emotion. With a quivering voice, but steadily and distinctly, he affirms his own unworthiness. But seeing them all of one mind and determined in this matter, he bows to the Divine Will.

The sub-dean kneels thereupon before him; the master of ceremonies claps his hands, and at this signal all the cardinals arise and remain standing in homage to the new sovereign. Instantly all the canopies above the seats are lowered save that above the seat of the Pope-elect. The sub-dean then asks: 'By whose name do you wish to be called?' 'By the name of Leo XIII.' is the prompt answer.

He is next, after a short prayer at the altar, conducted behind it between the two senior cardinal deacons. There he is divested of the cardinalitial robes, and clad in the traditional white vesture worn by his predecessor. Meanwhile they have placed upon the platform of the altar the portable Papal throne—*Sedia gestatoria*—and all is in readiness for the first solemn ceremony of doing homage to the newly-elected Vicar of Christ.

Leo XIII., attired in the insignia of his dignity, now advances from behind the altar, and takes his place on the throne. The sub-dean takes from the Pope's hand the sapphire

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cardinalitial ring, and puts on his finger the ring of the Fisherman ; then he bends low and kisses the feet of his Vicar on earth who in the Last Supper washed and kissed the feet of His apostles ; he then kisses the Pope's hand, while Leo in his turn gives him on both cheeks the kiss of peace. So do all the cardinals in succession, and then the officers of the conclave.

" This first homage or ' adoration ' over, the senior cardinal deacon, Catterini, asks the Pope's permission to announce the election to the outside world. . . . There is a great crowd on the square beneath, and within St. Peter's. The old ones among them knew at what hour very nearly the morning ballot must have ended. The blue smoke had not made its appearance at the time expected ; the election was then an accomplished fact, and the fever of expectancy grew and grew.

" At length on the exterior loggia of St. Peter's, overlooking the square, the Papal Cross appeared, with the acolytes, masters of ceremonies, mace-bearers, &c., followed by Cardinal Catterini, who amid the breathless silence pronounced these words :

" 'I announce to you tidings of great joy.'

Leo XIII. owed his election entirely to his then seemingly precarious state of health, and to the belief amongst the cardinals that he could not live long. As the other aspirants to the Papal throne required time to forward their interests, a short Pontificate was desirable ; and with that end in view the frail Cardinal Pecci was elected. Singularly enough he outlived

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them all. Once enthroned, Leo XIII.'s health improved, and as the weary years went by the cardinals awaiting his demise, one by one, hopeless and disappointed, sank into the grave.

The veto, or right of exclusion exercised by European sovereigns, has played no small rôle in the elections of Popes during the past century. Of late years, however, the privilege of blackballing a candidate for the Papacy, at any time before the requisite majority of two-thirds of the electors have pronounced in his favour, has been practically monopolised by Austria. In 1823, when Cardinal Della Genga was elected Pope, the issue from the beginning lay between Cardinals Gonsalvi and Severoli (as in the last election when Pius X. was elected the issue lay between Cardinals Gotta and Rampollo). Austria on that occasion threatened to veto Cardinal Gonsalvi; and as it was useless to vote for him under these conditions, many of his supporters in the conclave went over to Cardinal Severoli. The first scrutiny took place on September 21st.

"Cardinal Severoli obtained twenty-six votes out of the necessary thirty-three.

"His election seemed assured.

"Just before the second scrutiny, when both the Cardinal and his friends were rejoicing, the hand of Austria dashed the cup of joy from his lips. Cardinal Albani announced that he had been authorised by the Austrian Emperor to veto the election of Cardinal Severoli.

"In the second scrutiny he only received two votes.

"The exercise of the veto in his case created

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a profound impression, as it had been supposed that Cardinal Gonsali was the sole object of Austria's antipathy.

"Evidently considering it hopeless to oppose the Emperor, Cardinal Severoli's supporters asked His Eminence to nominate another candidate. He named Cardinal de la Genga (apparently at the suggestion of Austria), who on September 28th was elected to the Papal throne as Leo XII."

The cardinals having met in conclave for the election of a successor to Leo. XIII. a portion of the Vatican was, as usual, set apart for their accommodation ; immense rooms being subdivided by wooden partitions into cubicles, or improvised bedrooms, with slight regard for ventilation.

Not unlike Versailles, conveniences of any kind, sanitary or otherwise, are remarkable by their absence in the eleven thousand rooms of the Vatican ; and, despite their high and sacred office, the lot of the cardinals so confined was not to be envied in that grilling weather.

To add to their discomfort, many suffered from dysentery ; and one died from the effects of this complaint shortly after the election of Pope Pius X.

A vast crowd assembled every afternoon in the Piazza San Pietro to learn the result of the day's voting and discuss the prospects of the two most popular aspirants for the high office, Cardinals Gotta and Rampollo, and all eyes turned anxiously towards the rusty stove-pipe projecting out of the chapel window.

But the deliberations of the cardinals were

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prolonged ; and day after day the smoke of the burning ballot papers continued to appear, disappointing the expectant multitude, and increasing the anxiety and tension under which the partisans of the favourites were labouring. When finally at the usual hour no smoke issued from the stove-pipe (a modest means of communicating to the world at large so great an event as the election of a new Pontiff) the excitement became intense, each of the two parties, particularly that of Gotta, claiming the victory. Great therefore was the surprise of all when the announcement was made that Cardinal Sarto, a comparative stranger, and practically unknown to the Roman population, was elected Pope under the name Pius X.

It later transpired that the procedure followed in the case of Cardinal de la Genga was again adopted by Austria. When the voting for the two popular candidates had reached the determining point, the Austrian Emperor intervened, and by the exercise of his veto secured the election of the Imperial nominee, Cardinal Sarto, who little dreamed when leaving (with a return ticket) the Venice he loved, that he should see it no more ; that he was to wear the Triple Tiara, and remain for the rest of his life confined in the Vatican.

## II

When the excitement caused by the election had calmed down, I talked over my desire to paint the new Pontiff with the Duke di Mondragone (the present Prince Giustiniani Bandini), who was acquainted with Monsignor Bisletti, the Major-domo, and also with Mon-

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signor Merry del Val, the secretary to the conclave, and now acting Minister of State.

He very kindly arranged a visit to the Vatican, in order to present me to both these reverend gentlemen, and enlist their good offices.

On the day appointed, the Duke and I drove to the Vatican. We first went to the apartment of Monsignor Bisletti, where we found a number of people waiting in an ante-chamber. The Duke sent in his card, and shortly afterwards we were ushered into another room, where we found the Monsignor awaiting us.

He was a small man, with a pallid, impassive face, which mechanically lit up, from time to time, with an ingratiating smile, whilst his manner was suave in the extreme.

He appeared most anxious to oblige my noble friend, and as he was in close touch with the Holy Father, his promise to arrange sittings at an early date filled me with happiness.

Having accomplished the object of our visit, we took our leave with many expressions of gratitude, and proceeded to the apartment of Monsignor Merry del Val. He occupied the famous wing of the Borgia family, scene of so many revels and tragedies in that bygone period.

We first entered into a large hall, on the walls of which were some very fine frescoes. In this room the guards were wont to pass a merry time in good Pope Alexander's reign, when ladies with little to lose and much to gain were not altogether strangers to its hospitality.

Their spirits, however, if they still lingered there, no longer filled the air with laughter and ribald jests; all was still as we entered. Alone,

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a melancholy-looking secretary at the extreme end of the immense room met our view, and as we approached requested in sad tones information as to our business.

The Duke presented his card, desiring an interview with Monsignor, and the secretary disappeared on his mission of inquiry. He soon returned, and asked us to follow him. We then entered into another room, almost equally spacious, which was that formerly occupied by the Borgian Pope himself, and where his amiable son and daughter performed some of their historic exploits.

It was in here that Cesare Borgia stabbed Perotte, his father's minion, with his own hand, when the youth had taken refuge in Pope Alexander's arms.

“The blood spurted out upon the priestly mantle, and the young man died there,” says the chronicle.

It was also in this apartment that, later, the dead Pontiff's body lay, “a black and swollen mass hideous to contemplate,” after he had partaken by mistake of the poisoned wine he had intended for Cardinal Adriano of Corneto. A contemporary, Francesco Guicciardini, thus describes the scene, and the defunct:—

“All Rome ran with indescribable gladness to view the corpse. Men could not satiate their eyes with feeding on the carcass of the serpent, who, by his unbounded ambition and pestiferous perfidy, by every demonstration of horrible cruelty, monstrous lust, and unheard of avarice, selling without distinction things sacred and profane, had filled the world with venom.”

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What a contrast this picture presents to the earlier portrait of Alexander, as he rode in triumph to the Lateran after his election in 1492.

"He sits upon a snow-white horse," writes Michael Fernus, "with serene forehead, with commanding dignity; as he distributes his blessing to the crowd, all eyes are fixed upon him, and all hearts rejoice."

Another panegyrist, Jason Nainus, describes "His kingly brow, free countenance full of majesty . . . the heroic beauty of his whole body . . . adorn the seat of the apostles with his divine form in the place of God."

Such fulsome adulation of new, as well as of defunct sovereigns, is common to all ages, but in this case the young Cardinal Giovanni de Medici appears to have discerned the true character of Alexander. Giovanni was then about eighteen, having received the cardinal's hat when thirteen years of age.

"We are in the wolf's jaws," he whispered to his kinsman Cibo at the conclave; "he will gulp us down unless we make our flight good."

Many a rich prince of the Church must have thought the same a few years later!

"Every night," writes Carlo Capelle, the Venetian Ambassador in 1500, "they find in Rome four or five murdered men; bishops, and others."

Of cardinals, Pope Alexander poisoned five; and it was common belief in Rome that, had it not been for his unfortunate mistake in drinking the poisoned wine intended for the sixth, the dinner parties of His Holiness would, in time, have depleted the college of cardinals. The

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cardinals disposed of and their wealth absorbed, his scheme to convert the Papacy into a secular hereditary kingdom, with his son Cesare as successor, might have been accomplished.

Cesare Borgia's idea of a pleasant afternoon's pastime for the Holy Father's enjoyment is thus described by Capelle :—

“ He (Cesare) turned out some prisoners sentenced to death, in a courtyard of the palace, arrayed himself in fantastic clothes, and amused the Papal party by shooting the unlucky criminals.

“ They ran round and round the court, crouching and doubling to avoid his arrows. He showed his skill by hitting each where he thought fit. The Pope and Lucrezia looked on applaudingly.”

These and many other incidents in the history of Alexander VI. filled my thoughts as we entered the room where so many scenes in his life had been enacted. We then observed Monsignor Merry del Val rise from his writing table in a corner of the great chamber, and advance to meet us.

Of medium height, slightly built, his face was singularly interesting ; largely, perhaps, due to the remarkable quality of his eyes, rich brown in colour, with a luminous circle around the iris. The features were regular and refined, the mouth well-shaped, suggesting a discreet appreciation of earthly enjoyment ; the whole dominated by a high intellectual forehead.

Altogether he was a welcome contrast to the usual style of ecclesiastic, and certainly an at-

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tractive personality. We had a pleasant conversation on things in general, and before we left he echoed the promise of Monsignor Bisletti in regard to the object of our visit.

Whilst awaiting the sittings from the Pope, I expressed a desire to paint a study of Monsignor Merry del Val's head, and he made an appointment for a few days later.

The story of the Merry del Val family is that of the many Irish Roman Catholic refugees of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who founded distinguished houses in France and in Spain.

To-day O'Reilly, O'Neill, O'Sullivan (my mother's family), and O'Farrel are honoured names in Spain and in South America, as are in France those of Dillon and Mac-Mahon.

The founder of the family of Merry del Val was, I believe, a Mr. Merry of Waterford, who married a Miss Wall of the same city. He fled from the relentless cruelty and ferocity of the penal laws then affecting Roman Catholics in Ireland, and succeeded in escaping to Spain, landing in that country with other exiles.

He must have been a remarkably able man, as he rose to be a Grandee of Spain, filling a position of high importance.

His son united his mother's name to the family one, and as the letter W does not exist in the Latin tongue, it was replaced by its equivalent V; whilst the unnecessary final L of Wall was dispensed with.

The father of Monsignor Merry del Val was Spanish Minister to the Vatican at the period of my first visit to Rome, and was well known for

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the strictness of his religious views, which approached intolerance, and for his intransigence in clerical matters.

Under a more suave and attractive exterior his son, now in power at the Vatican, inherits these qualities to an eminent degree ; his intransigence possibly exceeding that of his father.

He is, perhaps, the most highly educated man in the Vatican, and certainly the only linguist there. The Pope himself speaks Italian and indifferent German ; one or two of the lesser lights speak Italian and bad French ; whilst Cardinal Merry del Val has complete command of four languages—Spanish, Italian, French, and English—speaking and writing each with fluency and ease.

Consequently he has the advantage over his predecessors and colleagues of being in immediate touch with clerical feeling and public opinion in four countries. For he receives all the principal newspapers, and can master their contents without having recourse to translations.

One would think that such a faculty would broaden the mind, but from what I could observe it has not done so in the case of the Papal secretary. Merry del Val's views are more those of the sixteenth than the twentieth century. This has been shown by his attitude during the recent conflict between the Church and the French Government, and by his countenancing methods (*vide* the disclosures in connection with the agent he employed in Paris) characteristic of periods when consciences could be set at rest with the Jesuitical fallacy, “the end justifies the means.”

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It is remarkable that a man of his age, of liberal education, with a known partiality for journalists and newspaper co-operation, should have so little perception of the modern trend of thought, and endeavour to enforce religious doctrines in a spirit of mediæval intolerance.

A tedious month now passed by, during which my hopes of sittings from the Holy Father were sustained by empty promises, and nothing more. Impatient at last, and weary of waiting, I called on Monsignor Bisletti, determined this time to know whether the Pope were going to accord me the sitting or not. Monsignor Bisletti was full of regrets and sympathy ; all he could do had been done, but a new obstacle had arisen. The Austrian Emperor desired that his Court painter should paint the first portrait of Pope Pius. If I desired, however, to remain for a few months longer, the matter would possibly be arranged ; in the meantime he, Monsignor Bisletti, would continue his exertions on my behalf. So, with protestations of goodwill, which I no longer believed, he bowed me out, delighted no doubt to get rid of me for once and all, whilst I consigned him to the region most dreaded by the clerical mind. I had more than a suspicion then, that the Major-domo had taken no steps whatever on my behalf ; he had simply made smooth promises, which he never tried or intended ever to fulfil.

I returned to the hotel in no amiable frame of mind, resolving to leave for England at once. After dinner, on reading in the evening paper that my friend Cardinal Moran had arrived in Rome from Australia, I decided to delay my

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departure, in order to see him, and place the whole matter before him.

Calling the following morning at the Irish College, where the Cardinal was staying, I found he had been very ill in the Red Sea, and was still unwell. He received me, however, greeting me with the kindness and benignity which distinguished him. I poured out my tale of disappointment, and familiar with Vatican methods, Cardinal Moran comforted me with the assurance that all would be well, and he would himself deal with the matter. His Eminence was at that time senior cardinal in Rome, with right of access to the Pope whenever he desired it.

A few days afterwards I received word from his secretary, Dean O'Haran, to be ready to accompany him the following morning to the Vatican, to interview Monsignor Bisletti.

All the information I could get from Dean O'Haran as we drove to the Vatican was, that the matter was likely to be arranged ; to further questions he turned a deaf ear, his countenance remaining inscrutable as that of a Sphinx.

On arriving at Monsignor Bisletti's apartment we found the usual crowd in the ante-chamber, but were not long in being summoned to the great man's private reception-room, leaving those who had been waiting before our arrival to watch our exit with envious eyes.

We were received with honied cordiality, and the sweetest sympathy at my disappointment was proffered to me by Monsignor Bisletti.

The conversation thus turning to the subject of the portrait, Dean O'Haran expressed Cardinal Moran's wish that the promises on which I had

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depended should be fulfilled, and some effort made to get me the sittings I had so long waited for.

"I have done everything possible," said Bisletti. "I am sorry, but it is out of the question just now."

"Surely you can give me a more comforting answer," asked Dean O'Haran persuasively. "It is a great disappointment to Mr. Thaddeus, and he has relied on you entirely."

"I know it! I feel it! but I have done everything in my power; and now, with the Emperor's painter coming, it is absolutely impossible, quite out of the question."

"You are sure there is no further hope?"

"Quite sure; in a few months' time, perhaps, but now impossible! absolutely impossible!"

With that he arose, intimating that the incident was closed, and the sooner we departed the better. We took the plain hint, and as we went towards the door, Monsignor Bisletti wishing us every blessing in the most dulcet tones, and I feeling much dejected at the failure of our interview, Dean O'Haran gave an ejaculation.

"How stupid of me, I had quite forgotten it!"

"Forgotten what?" asked Monsignor Bisletti.

"Oh, nothing! You are quite sure no further steps can be taken in this question of His Holiness's portrait?"

"I have already said so," answered Monsignor Bisletti testily; "there is nothing to be done." And thereupon, to end the subject and our visit, he added curtly, "So glad to have seen you; good morning."

"One moment," said Dean O'Haran. "I am

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extremely sorry to hear the arrangement is impossible—extremely sorry. What I had forgotten was a letter from His Eminence Cardinal Moran to His Holiness concerning this matter. His Eminence desires you to deliver it at the earliest possible moment. May I count on your doing so?"

As Dean O'Haran spoke he drew a large envelope from his breast pocket and handed it to Monsignor Bisletti.

The impassive face of the latter did not change in the least; he only bit his lip as he looked at the giver, and then at the letter. He gave the necessary assurance, and we parted with the most fervent expressions of goodwill. What he thought of us after we left only the recording angel can tell.

When we were in the carriage again, I turned to my true friend in need, who still preserved his Sphinx-like composure.

"That letter was a *coup de théâtre!*!" I exclaimed admiringly.

"One does in Rome as Rome does," was the complacent answer.

Two days afterwards the impossible happened.

A notice came from the Vatican that His Holiness would receive me next morning at eight o'clock. The Cardinal had triumphed, and it was Monsignor O'Haran who played the winning card!

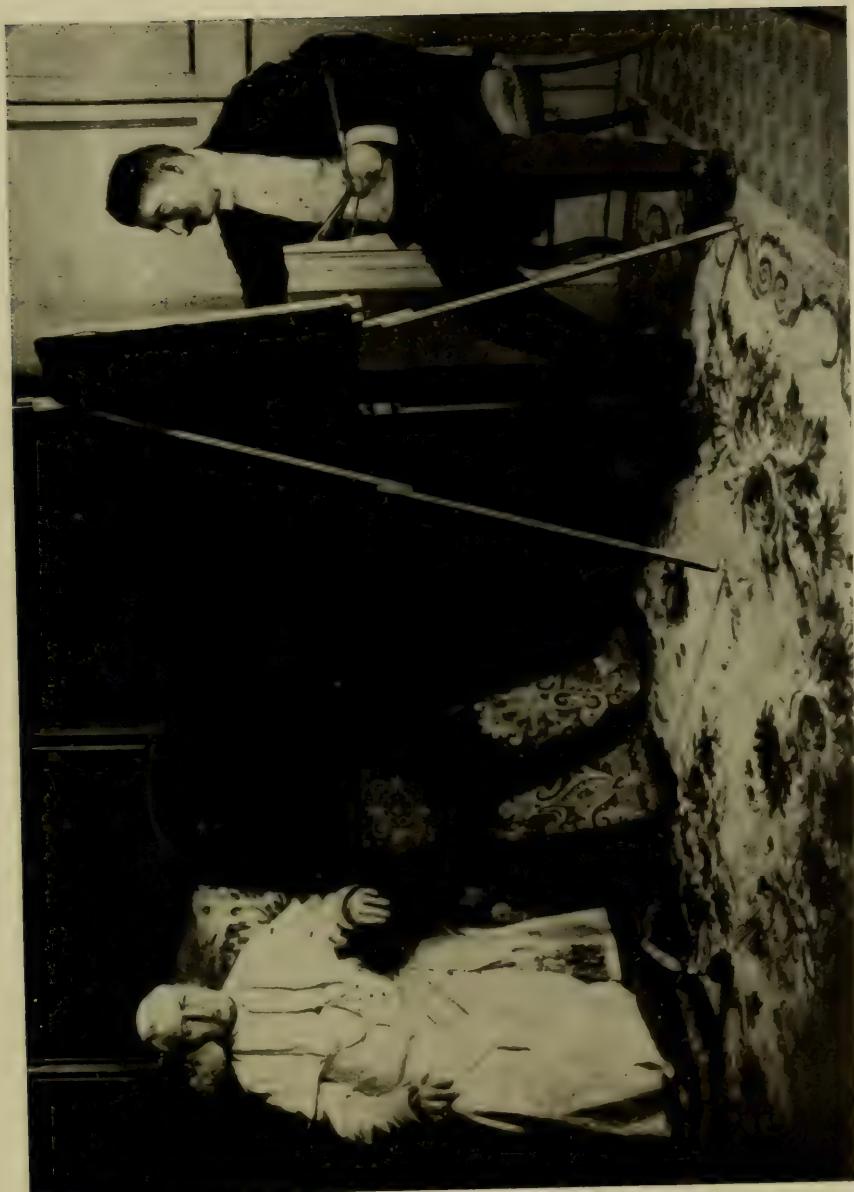
## ITALY

**E**TIQUETTE at the Vatican exacts evening dress or uniform in the presence of the Pope. I had to face the ordeal of so attiring myself at six in the morning. This was a necessary proceeding in my case if I allowed time for breakfast and the drive from my hotel to the Vatican, in order to arrive at 7.30 or thereabouts.

To reach the present Pope's apartment you must drive around the Piazza San Pietro to the left, continuing behind the church. You then pass under an archway guarded by Swiss, and in a small piazza is the entrance to the Papal residence.

A broad imposing staircase of marble with a crimson carpet running up the centre led to the Pontiff's apartment, in the ante-chamber of which I found a number of servants in the Pope's livery awaiting my arrival. I was then ushered into a great "salon de reception," the walls of which were hung with rich crimson silk brocade, the fauteuils and canopies being covered with the same costly material, whilst under foot was a velvet-pile carpet, also crimson in colour. The general effect was both pleasing to the eye and impressive.

Presently the secretary to the Pope, a young Venetian, Don Giuseppe Pescini, joined me,



POPE PIUS X SITTING FOR HIS PORTRAIT TO THE AUTHOR



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stating that His Holiness would receive me in a few minutes. After a short conversation I accompanied him into a smaller room where I arranged my painting materials and easel, and which I understood adjoined the bedroom of the Pope.

The walls of this room were panelled with beautiful velvet brocade, and pictures worked in silk thread, remarkable examples of patience and artistic feeling. Beyond a few fauteuils, a table and an ebony cabinet richly inlaid, there was little furniture in the room, which was of modest proportions. These were not the rooms I remembered in Pope Leo's time. I stood admiring the panels, when the door opposite me opened, and the new Pontiff entered the room. As the secretary and I sank on one knee, I noticed that His Holiness had an anxious, tired look.

He extended his hand, and, whilst I kissed the Apostolic ring, asked wearily in Italian how and where I desired him to sit for his portrait. Evidently the whole thing was a bore and worry to him, and whilst blessing Cardinal Moran for the privilege I then enjoyed, I could not help feeling sorry for the Holy Father.

In his new and arduous position he had many matters to preoccupy him and absorb his time, without the additional penance of posing for a picture, a tiresome and fatiguing operation at best. Accustomed to the fresh air and freedom of action he enjoyed in Venice, the confinement in the Vatican was already telling on the Pope's health, and as a result he certainly did not look well.

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It was common knowledge in Rome that there had been serious differences between His Holiness and the Vatican dignitaries on the question of carriage exercise in the Pope's garden. The late Pontiff, frail and delicate, always drove in the closed barouche; a relic of former days, exclusively reserved for Papal enjoyment. When Pius X. longed to get a breath of fresh air after the excessive heat of the day and the suffocating atmosphere of the Vatican, he found this ancient carriage awaiting him at the door.

It had been standing there for some hours, and as he prepared to enter it he started back.

It was hot as an oven.

He requested an open carriage to be brought instead, but was informed that to use such a vehicle was contrary to the tradition of the Vatican, and, furthermore, that it would be considered undignified for the Pope to drive in any other than the one before him.

His Holiness, vexed and disappointed, preferred the comparative cool of the Vatican, and returned back to his apartment.

He ordered an open carriage for the following afternoon. His amazement and annoyance may be conceived when he found his order disregarded, and the same closed carriage awaiting him. As his health was undoubtedly suffering he insisted on his wish being carried out, and after much grumbling and obstinate resistance on the part of the Roman cardinals succeeded at last in his desire.

This satisfactory result was only accomplished shortly before my interview with His Holiness.

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I placed one of the fauteuils in the light I desired, and the Pontiff immediately sat down. After a few experimental changes in the pose, I decided on the position of the head, and without delay set to work.

The cool of the morning was already passing away and the great heat of the sun began to penetrate the room as I commenced the picture.

Never had a painter so good a model as the Holy Father! For an hour he never moved, until, at last, obliged to take a rest myself, I requested His Holiness at the same time to repose. With a sigh of relief he changed his position in the chair, and, for the first time, entered into conversation with me.

He commenced by asking me about myself and my career. Afterwards we fell into discussing general subjects. As we continued thus conversing His Holiness regarded me with a more kindly eye, demonstrating thereby that the bitterness of his feeling towards Cardinal Moran and myself was disappearing.

It was about 9.30 when the Pope took up his position again, and I recommenced operations. The heat by this time was excessive, and the front of my shirt gradually assumed the appearance of a wet rag. I really spent as much time in mopping my face as in painting the study.

Bad, however, as my plight undoubtedly was, the Holy Father's was still worse. The white soutane he wore (the material for which is woven by the nuns of a certain convent whose privilege it is to manufacture this cloth) is made from the wool of unborn lambs, and whilst fine as silk,

## Recollections of a Court Painter

is an oppressively warm garment to wear in such tropical heat as we were then experiencing.

It is therefore easy to imagine the discomfort he must have endured when I, in the lighter costume of evening dress, was literally melting away.

At the end of the sitting I craved his permission to bring a photographer with me the following morning, and he most graciously accorded his permission. I was anxious to record, in one picture, the Pope sitting to me for his portrait, partly from an historical point of view, and partly to disarm calumny, to which I had been exposed whilst painting his predecessor. The photograph as it stands is I believe unique.

The next sitting was arranged to take place at 7.30. Before retiring, His Holiness was most benign and kindly in his manner, gratifying me by expressing an interest in the progress of the work.

I left, extremely pleased with a morning which had not commenced so auspiciously as it terminated.

In build the Pope is short and thickset, with heavy limbs, which causes him to walk rather awkwardly. His face, marked with the wholesome crudities of a peasant, was a dull olive in tone.

Far from being Italian in type, it bore the impress of a purely Teutonic origin. The hands of His Holiness, singularly large and powerful, are not unlike those of a farm labourer, accustomed to heavy work.

Physically he is as unlike Pope Leo XIII. as Cromwell was unlike Richelieu. Leo gave one

## Italy

the impression of intellectual dignity and austerity, whilst the characteristics of Pius X. are homely benevolence and simple religion.

In repose the face is sad, almost stern; but when it lights up with a pleasant smile, the radiance of the expression obliterates all traces of sadness, and beautifies the actual plainness of the features.

I understood later that the set stern expression was contemporary with his new responsibilities, which he accepted so unwillingly, and found such a heavy burden to carry. One of the studies I made of his head was a profile, which when finished he did not seem to like, preferring another nearly full face.

“I desire,” he said, “to look out of the canvas. I always regard a person straight in the face when speaking.”

After studying the Pope as closely as a painter may, during the four long sittings he gave me, I should say that this remark represents the frankness of his character; and I venture still further to express as my opinion that he is a man who will concern himself with religious and charitable matters rather than with diplomacy and statesmanship, the responsibility for the latter, it is safe to affirm, resting with the Secretary of State.

With no aristocratic tradition to sustain, His Holiness is essentially a man of the people, and with his head and face he could not possibly be a bigot, or intolerant in his views.

He is purely and simply a Churchman and humanitarian.

The Holy Father's sense of humour was happy

## Recollections of a Court Painter

and spontaneous, but the nature of his duties just then did not conduce to the exercise of this lighter vein, and only at rare intervals was it expressed.

On one occasion whilst sitting to me, the Pope was much preoccupied with his thoughts, his face graver even than usual. I made some remark which amused him, the heavy dull eyes sparkled brightly, the anxious expression relaxed, the drawn features were transformed by a smile of enjoyment at the thought expressed. It was another face, and a most pleasant one to contemplate. There was so much merriment and sense of enjoyment in the twinkle of His Holiness's grey eye, that I could not resist saying :

"You have an Irish eye, Holy Father, not an Italian one."

"Allora, siamo fratelli!"<sup>1</sup> promptly, like a flash, responded His Holiness.

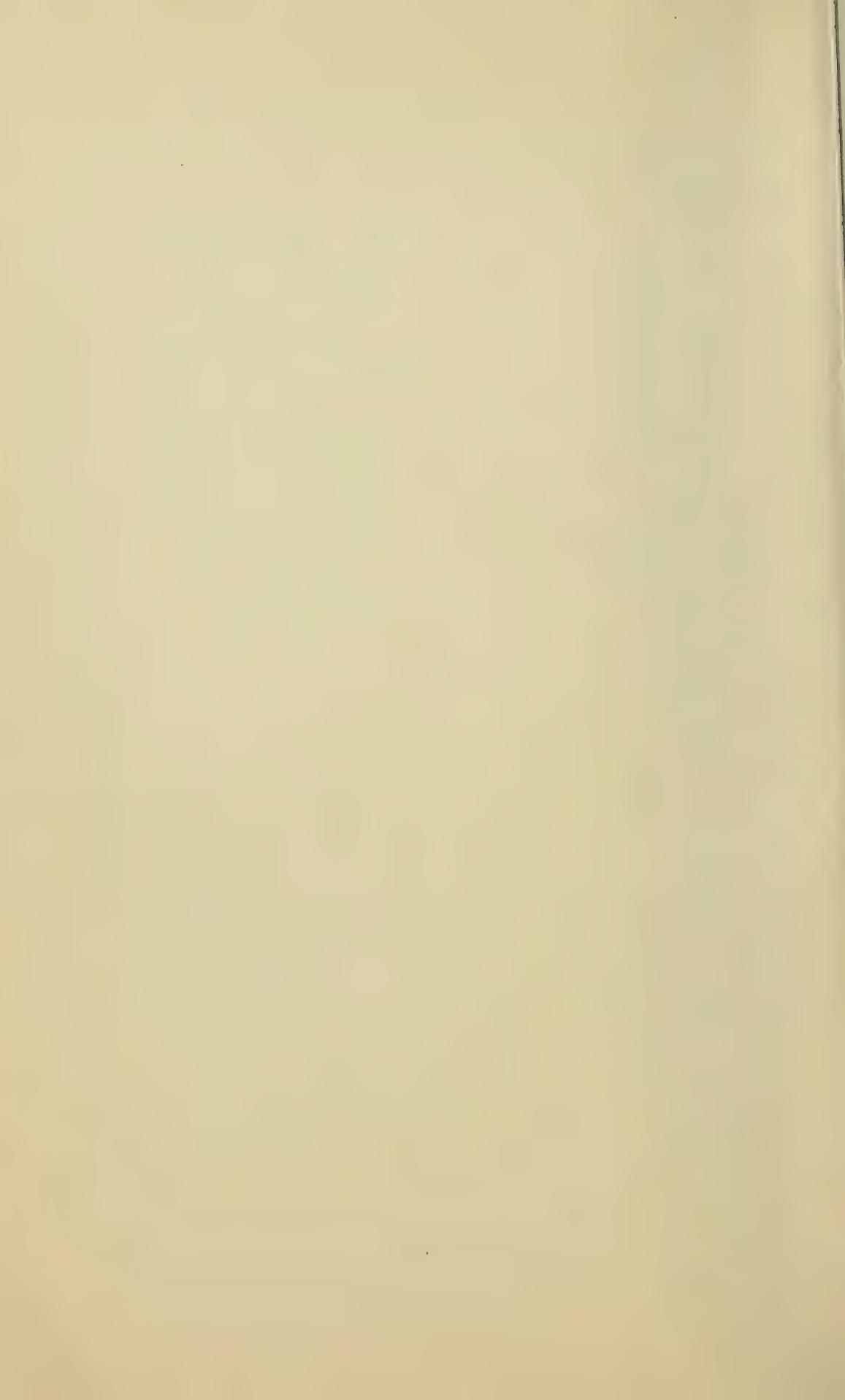
Before I left Rome the correspondent of the *New York Herald* interviewed me on the subject of the portrait of Pius X., and I related this little incident. It was introduced into two columns of matter dealing with the work, and evidently to journalistic minds it was the most interesting item in the whole article. For the past five years I have been bombarded with cuttings from newspapers of every country, and in every language, serving up this story in such varied forms that at last I hardly recognise it myself. In the year of grace 1909, *M.A.P.*, the offspring of that gifted writer and popular Parliamentarian, my old friend T. P. O'Connor, has imparted it to the world as a piece of news;

<sup>1</sup> Then we are brothers!

## Italy

and once again, with renewed youth, it starts on a new cycle of adventures. Fate seems to have ordained that the Irish eyes of the Pope should continue to follow me until the sands run out and I vanish into space!

THE END



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